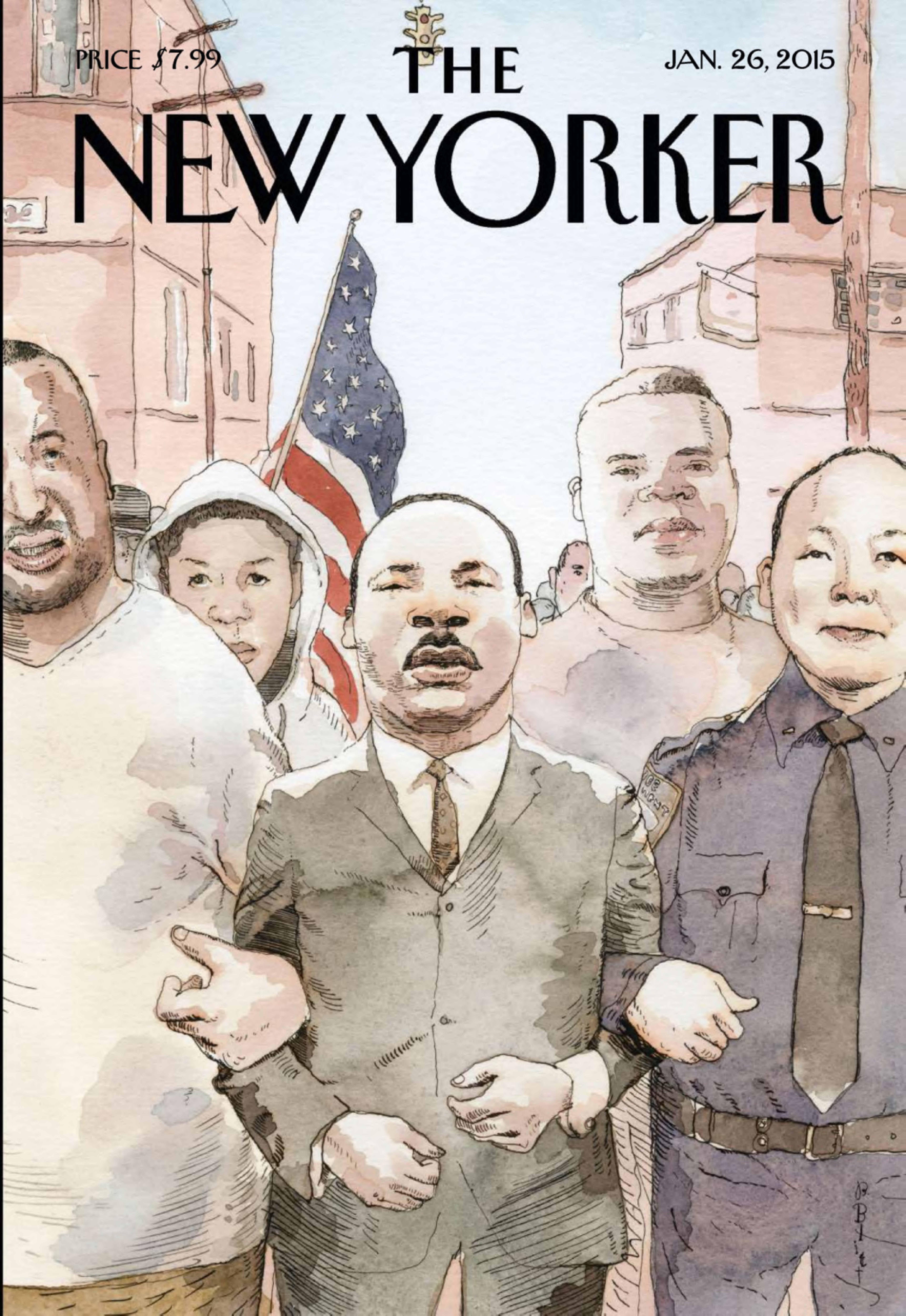


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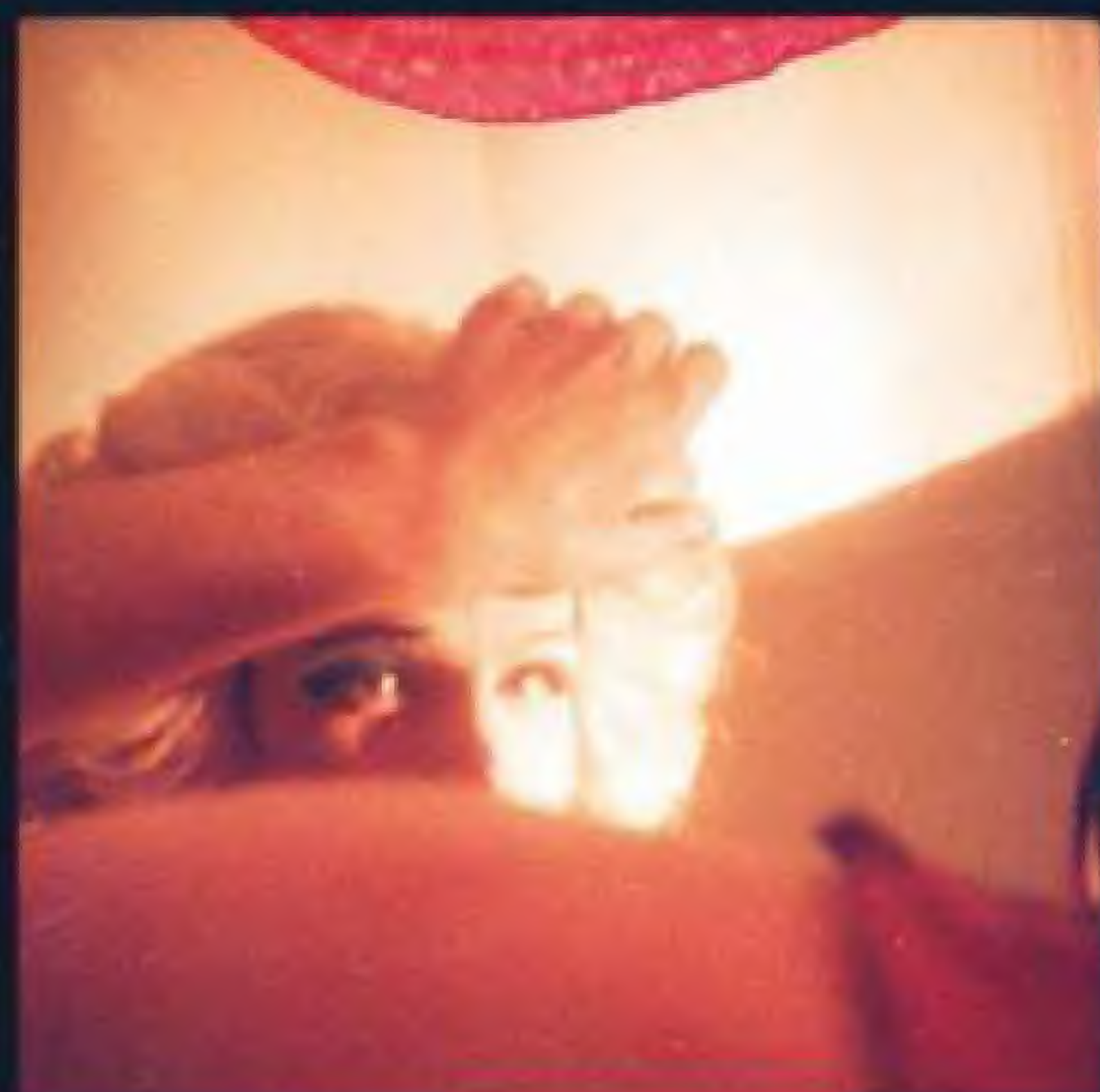
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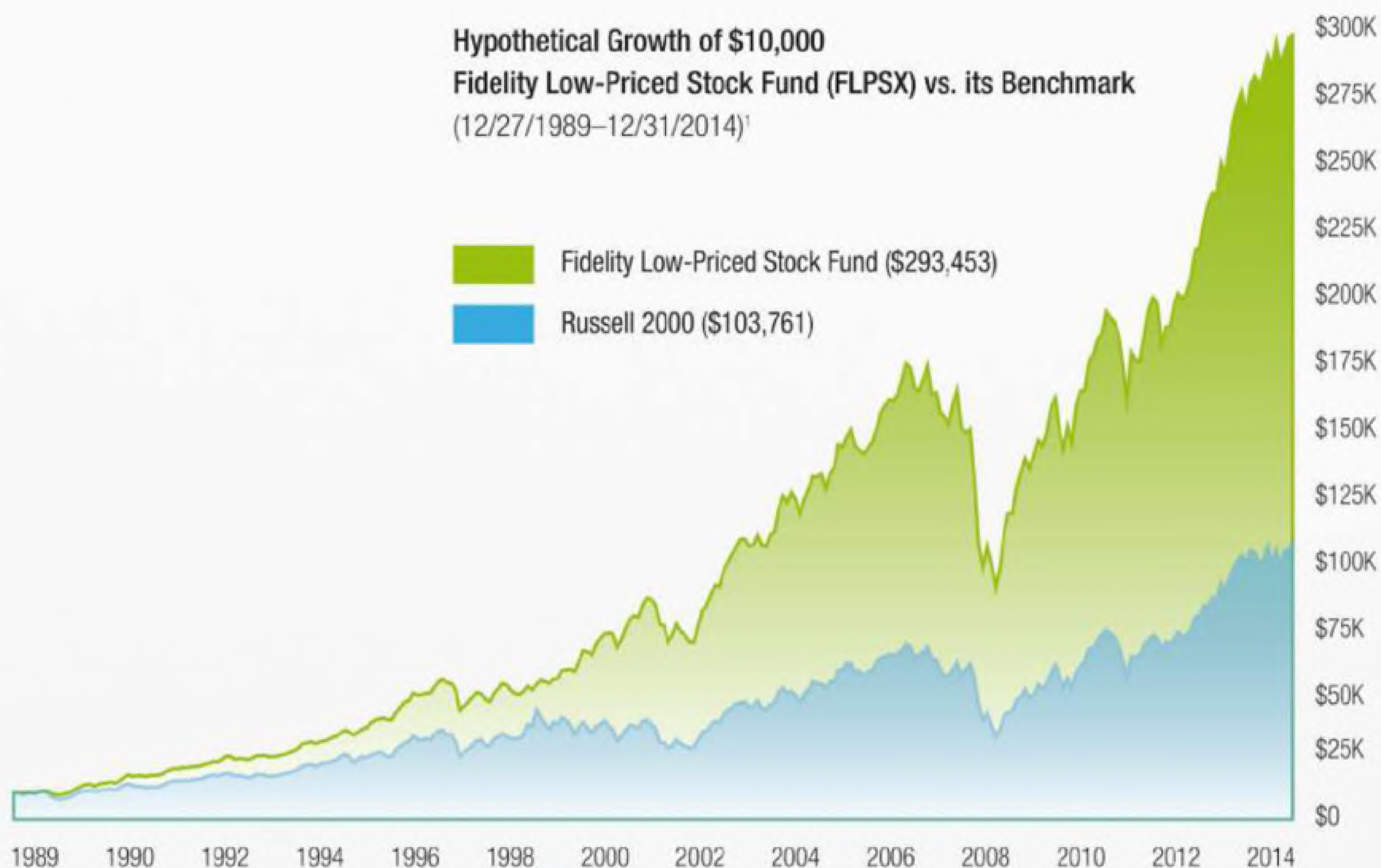
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Robert Kraus, February 7, 1959



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THE MAIL

ATONEMENT

Thank you for Raffi Khatchadourian's piece on Diyarbakir, Turkey, where I spent two of the best years of my life ("A Century of Silence," January 5th). He captures many of the complexities of the Armenian genocide. In the mid-sixties, I was a Peace Corps volunteer working in rural community development outside Diyarbakir and lived in a village with Kurds and ethnic Turks, some whose families migrated from the Balkans. In the city, shopkeepers would pull a cross from under their shirts and whisper that they were Christian. My boss, in the Ministry of Village Affairs, told me about Armenians who had killed his uncle in Chicago. I also met Kurdish *agas* who "owned," through a feudal-like system, a dozen or even fifty villages; I once watched from a small stool in an old hotel in the city as a young *aga* received supplicants who approached him shaking and kneeling, kissed his hand, and entered their pleas about marriages and crops. When land reform sent some of the *agas* into Syrian exile, an old *hodja*, a respected local leader, took villagers to the city and helped them obtain deeds to property; these Kurds became "followers of Ataturk." Although everyone listened to Kurdish music from Iraq and Syria (knowing that it was banned), I remember very little discussion about Kurdish nationalism. The young student leftists I met were more interested in land and social reform than in statehood. The reconciliation movement in Diyarbakir that Khatchadourian describes is inspiring. When the current bloodletting stops, I hope that the fundamental regional value of *misafirperverlik*, or hospitality, prevails.

Richard Wandschneider
Joseph, Ore.

I read Khatchadourian's article with sadness, curiosity, and hope. I grew up in Turkey and did not meet an Armenian until I started college, in the

United States. In high school, the only reference to the Armenian genocide was four sentences in my textbook that briefly mentioned the Tehcir Law enacted against the Ottoman Armenians. In 1998, when I was a senior, it would have been unthinkable for a Turkish prime minister to acknowledge the suffering of Armenians, as Recep Tayyip Erdoğan did (albeit incompletely). I hope Armenians in the diaspora know that there are many Turks, both in and outside the country, who would like to connect and reverse the state's history of denial. Turks abroad may be a very useful and underutilized ally in your quest for justice.

Ahmet Altiner, M.D.
New York City

CLICKBAIT

Andrew Marantz quotes the entrepreneur Emerson Spartz as saying, "The ultimate barometer of quality is: if it gets shared, it's quality" ("The Virologist," January 5th). Spartz is either confused or Orwellian. As a "content aggregator," he may have enough faith in the power of quantity to brainwash himself into believing that quality doesn't even exist. But, removed from the addictive context of social media, some of us can understand that simply because something has captured our attention does not mean that it is good or true or meaningful. Valuing the viral above all else is like being guided, for entertainment and edification, from car wreck to car wreck. The fact that Spartz is operating at the expense of those who have done original work indicates the cancerous nature of the so-called virality industry.

Jeremy Schlosberg
Merion, Pa.

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN



JANUARY 2015 WEDNESDAY 21ST THURSDAY 22ND FRIDAY 23RD SATURDAY 24TH SUNDAY 25TH MONDAY 26TH TUESDAY 27TH

AS AMERICANS WERE DEVOURING Stephenie Meyer's "Twilight" novels and the ensuing five blockbuster adaptations, starring Kristen Stewart, the Swedes were inventing their own unforgettable child-vampire lovers. "Let the Right One In," a 2004 novel written by John Ajvide Lindqvist, in which a bullied twelve-year-old boy falls in love, against an icy landscape, with a voracious neighborhood vampire girl, was adapted into a gorgeously gritty, thrilling Swedish film in 2008. Its success spurred a less artful American film adaptation—"Let Me In," starring Chloë Grace Moretz—and now a stage adaptation, which comes to St. Ann's Warehouse. Rebecca Benson and Cristian Ortega (above) star in the National Theatre of Scotland production, directed by John Tiffany and choreographed by his usual collaborator Steven Hoggett.

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MOVIES

OPENING

BLACK OR WHITE

A drama, about a widowed grandfather (Kevin Costner) who is engaged with his son-in-law's mother (Octavia Spencer) in a custody battle over their granddaughter. Opening Jan. 23. (In limited release.)

THE BOY NEXT DOOR

A thriller, starring Jennifer Lopez as a high-school teacher who has an affair with one of her students (Ryan Guzman). Directed by Rob Cohen. Opening Jan. 23. (In wide release.)

CAKE

Reviewed in Now Playing. Opening Jan. 23. (In limited release.)

THE DUKE OF BURGUNDY

Peter Strickland directed this drama, about two lovers (Sidse Babbett Knudsen and Chiara D'Anna) whose relationship involves elaborately staged fantasies. Opening Jan. 23. (In limited release.)

THE HUMBLING

Al Pacino stars in this adaptation of Philip Roth's novel, about an elderly actor's affair with a professor (Greta Gerwig) who had formerly been in a lesbian relationship. Opening Jan. 23. (In limited release.)

MOMMY

A drama, directed by Xavier Dolan, about a widow who struggles to raise her troubled son. Opening Jan. 23. (In limited release.)

MORTDECAI

David Koepp directed this comic thriller, about a secret agent and art dealer (Johnny Depp) who hunts for a stolen painting. Co-starring Gwyneth Paltrow. Opening Jan. 23. (In wide release.)

SONG ONE

A drama, starring Anne Hathaway as a woman who immerses herself in the indie-music world that her brother, who is in a coma, worked in. Directed by Kate Barker-Froyland; co-starring Mary Steenburgen. Opening Jan. 23. (In limited release.)

NOW PLAYING

American Sniper

Clint Eastwood's new film is a devastating pro-war movie and a devastating antiwar movie, a sombre celebration of a warrior's happiness and a sorrowful lament over a warrior's alienation and misery. Eastwood, working with the screenwriter Jason Hall, has adapted the 2012 best-seller by the Navy SEAL sharpshooter Chris Kyle, who is played here by Bradley Cooper. The film is devoted to Kyle's life as a son, husband, father, and, most of all, righteous assassin—a man always sure he is defending his country in Iraq against what he calls "savages." Perched on a rooftop in Ramadi or Sadr City, he's methodical and imperturbable, and he hardly ever misses. For the role of Kyle, Cooper got all beefed up—from the looks of it, by beer as much as by iron (it's intentionally not a movie-star body). With his brothers in the field, Kyle is convivial, profane, and funny; at home with his loving wife (played by Sienna Miller, who's excellent), he's increasingly withdrawn, dead-eyed, enraptured only by the cinema of war that's playing in his mind. As Kyle and his men rampage through the rubble of Iraqi cities, the camera records exactly what's needed to dramatize a given event and nothing more. There's no waste, never a moment's loss of concentration, definition, or speed; the atmosphere of the cities, and life on the streets, gets packed into the purposeful action shots.—*David Denby* (Reviewed in our issue of 12/22 & 29/14.) (In wide release.)

Blackhat

When a hacker causes a meltdown at a Chinese nuclear reactor and manipulates soy futures at Chicago's commodities exchange, the F.B.I.—and its agent Carol Barrett (Viola Davis)—collaborates with Chen Dawai (Wang Leehom), a cyber-soldier from China, and Nick Hathaway (Chris Hemsworth), an imprisoned American super-hacker who was Dawai's roommate at M.I.T. (If Nick catches the villain, his sentence will be commuted.) The director, Michael Mann, offers some dazzling computer graphics to conjure the electron flux on which the modern world works but then abandons them for the

methodical plotting of a sprawling, disconnected, neutered thriller. Nick quickly morphs from a digital wizard into a standard-issue paramilitary superhero; he and Dawai's sister, Chen Lien (Tang Wei), fall in love and join forces in what becomes a jet-setting international caper. Though Mann stages a few striking shoot-outs, shows some gore, and delivers some topical references to cyber-politics, he can't mask the over-all sense of a mere simulacrum of characters, action, and, for that matter, thrills. Hints of a quasi-apocalyptic chill seem arbitrary—neither symbolic nor dramatic. The effect is like watching software run itself.—*Richard Brody* (In wide release.)

Cake

A car accident has left Claire Bennett (Jennifer Aniston), a Los Angeles lawyer, with scars on her face and a surgically reconstructed body. Venting acerbic contempt for the pain of others, she gets kicked out of a support group. Unable to move without agony, she suffers, above all, from grief at the loss of her young son in the crash. She's addicted to painkillers, and goes to extremes (including blackmail) to get them, putting her devoted housekeeper, Silvana (Adriana Barraza), through increasing difficulties and dangers. Meanwhile, Claire's hallucinations of a suicide victim (Anna Kendrick) launch her on flailing but heartfelt efforts at making connections. This howling melodrama, directed by Daniel Barnz, is tamped down and thinned out to showcase Aniston's actorly subtlety, but what results is, in effect, a feature-length promotional reel. Barnz limits Claire's life, inner and outer, to moments that allow for methodical expressions, and Aniston delivers them with an acting-class precision against which her powerful personality and formidable humor constantly strain. Barraza conveys the weight of experience in sighs and inflections, and Kendrick is incisively sly, but the slack and purposeless direction leaves the entire cast emoting in a void.—*R.B.* (In limited release.)

F for Fake

Orson Welles, who revamped cinematic narrative with "Citizen Kane," took

another three decades to revolutionize the documentary form with this 1973 movie—but he did so with such wily exuberance and breezy philosophical depth that the later achievement may prove even more enduring. The speculative marvel begins with Welles onscreen, performing magic tricks. He also shows the cameraman, François Reichenbach, who, like an impish puppet, turns up later as part of the story—which is mainly an inside-out documentary about the art forger Elmyr de Hory and the literary forger Clifford Irving, who fabricated Howard Hughes's autobiography. Welles joins de Hory and Irving in Ibiza, where they were living, and reconstructs their strange stories while also surveying his own life. Welles films himself on location and at work in the editing room; his mercurial montage, multiplying angles and perspectives, streams of consciousness and visual asides, is one of his greatest creations. With meditations on Chartres and Picasso, artistic drive and carnal passion (conjured by footage of his girlfriend, Oja Kodar), he turns matters of truth and fiction into a happy house of infinitely reflecting, self-magnifying, and self-concealing mirrors.—*R.B.* (Film Forum; Jan. 21-22.)

Inherent Vice

The hero of the new Paul Thomas Anderson film is Doc Sportello (Joaquin Phoenix), a hairy-cheeked, dope-wreathed private investigator who lives near a beach. The time, unsurprisingly, is 1970. Doc's latest task is to trace a batch of missing persons: Mickey Wolfmann (Eric Roberts), a property developer; Mickey's squeeze, Shasta Fay Hepworth (Katherine Waterston), who used to go out with Doc; and a wandering stoner, Coy Harlingen (Owen Wilson), who couldn't find himself in a mirror. Somehow, everything is connected, although, since the movie is adapted from a novel by Thomas Pynchon, there is a strong chance that the connections will never be explained, let alone straightened out. Subplots overwhelm plots, and one gaudily named character after another—Sauncho Smilax (Benicio del Toro), Dr. Blatnoyd (Martin Short), Japonica Fenway (Sasha Pie-

terse), and Petunia Leeway (Maya Rudolph)—stops by and adds to the mix. Even as the story caves in, though, what binds the movie together is Anderson's feel for the drifting, smokelike sadness in Pynchon, and the sudden shafts of bright comedy; the least inhibited performance is that of Josh Brolin, playing not a hippie but a dirty cop called Bigfoot, who sucks on chocolate-coated bananas. With Reese Witherspoon, as a deputy D.A.; armed with a business suit and coiffed hair, she's a dead ringer for Tippi Hedren.—*Anthony Lane* (12/15/14) (In limited release.)

A Most Violent Year

Abel Morales (Oscar Isaac), the hero of J. C. Chandor's brilliant new movie, was born somewhere south of Texas, but by 1981—the year in which the film is set—he lives in Westchester and works in industrial Brooklyn. Abel owns a heating-oil-delivery company; he's a wealthy immigrant businessman swathed in double-breasted suits and a camel-hair coat. But while he desperately scrambles to raise money to buy a delivery depot on the East River, his rivals attack his trucks, and an assistant district attorney (David Oyelowo) charges him with fraud. The atmosphere of fear never lets up—assaults arrive out of nowhere—but much of the action consists of terse banter and veiled threats. Chandor is actually interested in business—entrepreneurial practice at the end of the industrial age and the persistence of honorable intentions in a corrupt milieu (the picture is an anti-“*Godfather*”). With Jessica Chastain, slinky in Armani, as Abel's wife, a cross between a forties-movie good-bad girl and Lady Macbeth; Albert Brooks, as his cautious lawyer; the volatile Elyes Gabel, as a nervous young immigrant who will never wear camel hair; and Alessandro Nivola, as a charming Mob scion working the oil trade. Shot on location throughout New York City by Bradford Young.—*D.D.* (1/12/15) (In limited release.)

Paddington

The title belongs to a bear, who arrives in London as a stowaway, speaking flawless English, with etiquette to match. The locals are no more surprised by this phenomenon than New Yorkers were by Stuart Little. Paul King's film, adapted from the books by Michael Bond, constructs a plot of sorts: Paddington's hide is sought by a taxidermist of malicious intent (Nicole Kidman), but the Brown family, who took him in—not without qualms—as a stranger, come to his rescue and thus to a full acknowledgment of his worth. There is a touch of the didactic here, with viewers reminded of their duty to refugees, and yet, from the opening sequence (featuring mock-historical footage from Paddington's native Peru), the

result is gratifyingly unstiff. We get fountains of slapstick, fed by a stream of inventive whimsy; even the leaves on the trees, painted on the walls of the Brown household, bud or blow away with the movie's mood. With Hugh Bonneville, Sally Hawkins, and Jim Broadbent. Originally, Colin Firth was to provide the hero's voice, but he was replaced by Ben Whishaw: lighter, more quizzical, and less wise.—*A.L.* (1/19/15) (In wide release.)

Predestination

Adapting a story by Robert A. Heinlein, the Spierig brothers, Michael and Peter, have confected a brisk, twisty, and atmospheric science-fiction thriller that piques the imagination and the senses with the low-rent exuberance of fifties drive-in classics. Ethan Hawke stars as a nameless agent in the Temporal Bureau, whose mission is to travel to 1970 to prevent a mad bomber's devastating attack in New York. Working undercover as a bartender in a downtown dive, he encounters a lonely and talkative pulp-fiction writer with a story to tell, and the new friends embark on some unplanned time-leaping together. With scant but eye-catching costumes and sets and quick, pugnacious camera strokes, the Spierigs summon thick and hyperbolic moods of period grit and metaphysical conspiracy. The long exposition—with its voice-over narration, interior monologues, and copious flashes back and forth throughout the late twentieth century—sets up delightfully bewildering riddles of shifting identities and multiple worlds. The desperate pursuit is flecked with surprising moments of hard-won and sincere tenderness. Though the dénouement seems rushed, it gleefully conjures a supernatural pileup of epochal proportions.—*R.B.* (In limited release.)

Selma

Like “*Lincoln*,” Ava DuVernay's stirring movie avoids the lifetime-highlights strategy of standard biopics and concentrates instead on a convulsive political process—the events leading up to the Voting Rights Act of 1965. President Lyndon Johnson (Tom Wilkinson), eager to move on to the War on Poverty, is pressured to change direction by Martin Luther King, Jr. (David Oyelowo), who is fighting for voting rights in the Oval Office and on the streets of Alabama. DuVernay captures King's canny and dominating resourcefulness in strategy meetings as well as the grand rhetoric of his public speeches, and Oyelowo adds a sexiness and an altered rhythm to King's speech patterns; his King is aggressive, barbed. A sequence set on the Edmund Pettus Bridge, as hundreds of protesters advance across the span and the Alabama state troopers terrorize them with tear gas, recalls the magnificent crowd scenes from Soviet silent classics by Eisenstein and Pudovkin.

With Carmen Ejogo, as Coretta Scott King; Colman Domingo, as the Reverend Ralph Abernathy; Tim Roth, as Governor George Wallace; and Oprah Winfrey, as the civil-rights activist Annie Lee Cooper.—*D.D.* (12/22 & 29/14) (In wide release.)

Still Alice

Julianne Moore stars as Alice Howland, a professor of linguistics at Columbia, who is stricken with early-onset Alzheimer's disease. Hitherto, life with her husband (Alec Baldwin) and three children (Kate Bosworth, Hunter Parrish, and Kristen Stewart) has run with enviable smoothness; now it hits a wall. What takes her and her loved ones aback is the force of that impact, and the rate at which she goes from forgetting a word, in passing, to not recognizing her own daughter. The intentions of the movie, which was written and directed by Richard Glatzer and Wash Westmoreland, are noble to a fault, and guaranteed to spur fellow-feeling in anyone familiar with Alice's condition; yet the outcome errs toward dullness, and the ironies are the size of billboards. (So what if she was an expert on language use? Would the loss be any less grievous if she were a waitress?) The film, as tasteful as the trimmings of her life, shies from the horror of seeing them torn away. People behave sadly, but not badly; would that it were always the case. And would that the actors, too, especially Moore and Stewart, had been let off the leash, as they strive toward harder and wilder truths.—*A.L.* (1/19/15) (In limited release.)

The Story of a Cheat

Few directors risk upstaging their movies with credit sequences as effervescent as the one with which Sacha Guitry (who also wrote the script and stars) opens this 1936 comedy: in a miniature satire on life behind the scenes on a movie set, he introduces the cast and crew, tipping his hand regarding the tricks of the trade. The ploy meshes with the cynical story that follows, of a poor boy with a Machiavellian streak who takes to heart an apprenticeship as a croupier in decadent Monte Carlo and becomes a first-class cardsharp. The cheat lives like a natural Chaplinesque aristocrat of humble origins who owes his fortune to his physical gifts and his poker face—and whose exploits, like those of the famous stage actor Guitry, would have been lost to history without the art of recording. The movie is something of a one-man show: Guitry adapted the screenplay from his own novel, and fills the film with his mordant voice-over. In this lively act of self-preservation, he bends elaborately theatrical artifice toward the cinema's primordial documentary function. In French.—*R.B.* (Anthology Film Archives; Jan. 24 and Jan. 28.)

REVIVALS AND FESTIVALS

Titles in bold are reviewed.

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES

“French Classics of the 1930s-40s.” Jan. 23 at 7 and Jan. 26 at 9: “*Hôtel du Nord*” (1939, Marcel Carné). • Jan. 24 at 5 and Jan. 28 at 7: “*The Story of a Cheat*.” • Jan. 24 at 7: “*The Raven*” (1943, Henri-Georges Clouzot). • Jan. 25 at 8:30: “*César*” (1936, Marcel Pagnol).

FILM FORUM

The films of Orson Welles. Jan. 21-22 at 12:40, 3:50, 7, and 10:10: “*The Immortal Story*” (1968). • Jan. 21-22 at 2, 5:10, and 8:20: “*F for Fake*.” • Jan. 23-24 at 2:40, 6:35, and 10:30: “*The Lady from Shanghai*” (1947). • Jan. 25 at 12:50: “*It's All True*” (1993, Bill Krohn and Myron Meisel). • Jan. 25 at 2:40, 7, and 9 and Jan. 26 at 12:30, 2:20, 4:10, 6, and 10:15: “*Othello*” (1952). • Jan. 26 at 8: “*Chimes at Midnight*” (1966).

FILM SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER

New York Jewish Film Festival. Jan. 22 at 8:30 and Jan. 26 at 8:15: “*The Zionist Idea*” (2015, Joseph Dorman and Oren Rudavsky). • Jan. 24 at 7: “*A Child of the Ghetto*” (1910, D. W. Griffith) and “*The Naked City*” (1948, Jules Dassin). • Jan. 25 at 1: “*Cry of the City*” (1948, Robert Siodmak).

FRENCH INSTITUTE ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE

“Eccentrics of French Comedy.” Jan. 27 at 4 and 7:30: “*Favorites of the Moon*” (1984, Otavio Lusseliani).

IFC CENTER

In revival. Jan. 23-25 at 11 A.M.: “*The Awful Truth*” (1937, Leo McCarey).

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Special screenings. Jan. 21 and Jan. 23 at 6, Jan. 22 and Jan. 25 at 4:30, Jan. 24 at 5:30, Jan. 26 at 4, and Jan. 27 at 6:30: “*A Thousand Suns*” (2013, Mati Diop). • Jan. 24 at 3 and Jan. 25 at 2: “*Touki Bouki*” (1973, Djibril Diop Mambéty).



MOVIE OF THE WEEK

A video discussion of Julie Dash's “*Daughters of the Dust*,” from 1991, in our digital edition and online.



“Untitled” (1928-33), by Franz Roh, in “Modern Photographs from the Thomas Walther Collection, 1909-1949.”

IMAGE CONSCIOUS

An adventurous collector's photographs at MOMA.

ONE OF THE SHARPEST EYES involved in MOMA's terrific new exhibition, “Modern Photographs from the Thomas Walther Collection, 1909-1949,” wasn't behind a camera. Walther himself is both sophisticated and shrewd. The German collector's adventurous sensibility is front and center in this show of nearly three hundred exceptional pictures. Sixty-five and based in Zurich, Walther has been buying photographs for the better part of his adult life. In the eighties, his prime focus was early-twentieth-century experimental European and American work, but he pushed past the confines of the modernist canon early on. In 2000, at the Metropolitan Museum, Walther's collection of flea-market finds became one of the first shows to put anonymous snapshots on museum walls. “Other Pictures” was groundbreaking, all the more so because, far from looking shabby or out of place, the images looked avant-garde. “Seeing is an act of creation,” Walther wrote in the catalogue. “These photographs remind us that the camera can be an extension of genius in the hands of any one of us.”

It is this idea that informs and invigorates the MOMA show. Organized by the museum's curators Quentin Bajac and Sarah Hermanson Meister, “Modern Photographs” highlights the collection's mix of the familiar and the little known, refreshing history with a sense of discovery. Iconic images by André Kertész, Aleksandr Rodchenko, Edward Weston, and Lisette Model provide reliable touchstones for viewers, but the show's spark comes from unfamiliar work. Willi Ruge, a German photojournalist with a daredevil streak, may not have a famous name, but a sequence of shots he

made during a 1931 parachute jump opens the show on a buoyant note. Ruge's picture of his legs dangling just above an aerial landscape, “Seconds Before Landing,” captures the exhibition's sense of innovation and adventure. A wall of pictures by Maurice Tabard, a French photographer ripe for rediscovery, picks up that spirit of experimentation. Like so much of the work here, Tabard's pictures slip between abstraction and representation, often with dreamlike double exposures that turn portraits—of models, a dancer, and Tabard himself—into psychological studies. Throughout the show, a sense of anxious instability is balanced by one of exhilaration. It's a restless mood shared by many young, process-minded photographers working today, and these neo-avant-gardists will find much here to inspire them, from Franz Roh's radical juxtapositions to Oskar Nerlinger's multilayered abstractions.

Even for connoisseurs, “Modern Photographs” is likely to be revelatory, given Walther's understanding of the medium's history. As the mid-century market continues to soar, it's exciting to learn that his collecting focus has shifted to the nineteenth century. “I'm very much a visual explorer,” he told me, “and there are still areas that nobody has looked at yet, still bodies of work that are full of surprises.”

—Vince Aletti

KNIGHTS VALLEY

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE ^{NO.} 3

BALANCING ACT

Knights Valley is a place of searing sun, one of the hottest regions of Sonoma. After sunset, however, temperatures can plummet by as much as 50 degrees. Beringer realized early on that these uncomfortable extremes benefit the grapes, with cold nights preserving the acidity in the ripening fruit. As a result, our Cabernet Sauvignon offers freshness and power in perfect balance. Local knowledge gives us the edge.

BERINGER ESTATES SELECTION





COMMITMENT TO CRAFT

THE LIVING LEGACY OF BERINGER VINEYARDS

There is an art and a science to creating fine wine; taking the measure of both brings rich rewards.

Even the most delicious and complex wines get their start from simple grapes. Fermentation begins as natural yeasts interact with the crushed fruit, releasing alcohol and organic compounds. Once the alcohol content reaches between 12 and 15 percent, the yeasts die off and fermentation stops, leaving behind remaining sugars, esters, and alcohol which will ultimately shape the wine's character.

METHOD & TERRAIN

Fostering the development of new technologies has been an important part of Beringer's legacy since its founding more than 140 years ago. Jacob Beringer introduced gravity-

flow fermentation to California in the 1880s, and utilized steam crushers and mechanized transportation systems in his cellars. He was among the first to use cellaring tunnels in California—underground spaces hollowed out of Spring Mountain that provided a cool and stable aging environment for his wines.

Beringer Vineyards knows how important temperature is to the fermentation process. Cooler fermentations preserve more aromatic esters while warmer fermentations nurture greater complexity. Beringer's signature Napa Valley Chardonnay goes through partial malolactic

fermentation to balance its bright acidity with a well-rounded mouthfeel—just one example of the attention Beringer gives to crafting beautiful expressions of flavor, structure, and finish in its wines.



California's rich topography functions as a full partner in Beringer's wine-crafting efforts. In Sonoma County, the cobbled alluvial soils of Knights Valley give rise to Beringer's renowned Bordeaux varietals—like its Cabernet, integrating rustic fruit notes with textured tannins. And in

Beringer's Camatta Hills Vineyard, the Cuesta Ridge coastal mountain range acts as a natural humidifier, balancing out daytime heat with maritime fog and cooler coastal winds from the Pacific: a superb microclimate for growing The Waymaker's blend of Syrah and Cabernet.

KNOWLEDGE & TRADITION

Beringer's efforts extend beyond production strategies and time-honored techniques. The Beringer tradition encompasses care for the land, through sustainable farming practices, and nurturing the skills of its people, who for five generations have worked to build Beringer's reputation for creating award-winning wines.

Illustration by Dan Bransfield

ESTD  1876

BERINGER.

Taste the spirit of Beringer's commitment to excellence and explore the full range of its offerings at **Beringer.com**.

MUSEUMS SHORT LIST

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM

"Painting Music in the Age of Caravaggio." Opens Jan. 20.

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

"Sturtevant: Double Trouble." Through Feb. 22.

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM

"Wang Jianwei: Time Temple." Through Feb. 16.

BROOKLYN MUSEUM

"Judith Scott: Bound and Unbound." Through March 29.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

"The Butterfly Conservatory." Through May 25.

AMERICAN FOLK ART MUSEUM

"A Shared Legacy: Folk Art in America." Through March 8.

ASIA SOCIETY

"Takahiro Iwasaki: In Focus." Opens Jan. 27.

BRONX MUSEUM

"Bosco Sodi: Untitled." Through March 15.

COOPER-HEWITT, SMITHSONIAN DESIGN MUSEUM

"Maira Kalman Selects." Through June 14.

MORGAN LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

"Lincoln Speaks: Words That Transformed a Nation." Opens Jan. 23.

NEW-YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

"Freedom Journey 1965: Photographs of the Selma to Montgomery March by Stephen Somerstein." Through April 19.

STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM

"Speaking of People: *Ebony*, *Jet* and Contemporary Art." Through March 8.

GALLERIES SHORT LIST

DOWNTOWN

Emily Roysdon
Participant, Inc.
253 E. Houston St. 212-254-4334.
Through Feb. 21.

Bill Walton

JTT
170A Suffolk St. 212-574-8152.
Through Feb. 22.

"Call and Response"

Brown
620 Greenwich St. 212-627-5258.
Opens Jan. 24.

BROOKLYN

Susan Bee
Southfirst
60 N. 6th St., Williamsburg.
718-599-4884.
Through Feb. 15.

Janice Guy

Cleopatra's
110 Meserole Ave., Greenpoint.
For more information, visit
cleopatras.us.
Through Feb. 23.

Philip Taaffe

Luhring Augustine
25 Knickerbocker Ave.,
Bushwick. 718-386-2746.
Through April 26.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum

"Cubism: The Leonard A. Lauder Collection"

This isn't so much a show as an institutional organ transplant, instantly correcting the Met's congenitally weak representation of the ur-twentieth-century art movement. It adds heft, both real and symbolic, to the museum's current thrust into realms of the modern and the contemporary, soon to feature in the former Whitney Museum building, on Madison Avenue. Last year, Lauder announced the gift of seventy-eight works by Cubism's Big Four: Picasso, Braque, Gris, and Léger. They tell a comprehensive story of the early stirrings, arcane birth, and world-changing maturation of Cubism in Paris, circa 1906-24. Mounted as a show, they seem like fixtures of a long-ripened permanent display, but many of the works are unfamiliar, and their aggregate is original—resetting an old impetus to grapple with a period of art that, probably for most of us, still dances beyond the grasp of cognizance. Through Feb. 16.

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

Kikuji Kawada

Best known for his 1965 book, "The Map," about the lingering trauma of Hiroshima in postwar Japan, the eighty-one-year-old photographer makes his solo debut in the U.S. His subject here is the cosmos, in aspects both real and imagined, with black-and-white images of storm clouds, a blazing comet, and the sun and moon in eclipse. Scientific objectivity gives way to a sort of sci-fi mysticism. In this fine series, Kawada moves beyond the inhumanity of nuclear disaster to envision the upheaval of creation itself. Through Jan. 24. (Stephenson, 764 Madison Ave., at 66th St. 212-517-8700.)

Kishio Suga

Suga was a key figure in the Japanese post-minimal sculpture movement Mono-ha, during the late sixties and early seventies, which utilized both organic and industrial materials—wood and oil, stones and steel—in simple and sometimes haphazard formations. This show reconstructs a 1975 installation, a low rampart of rope, strung diagonally, and also features a more recent room-filling work of copper-wire zigzags and wooden plinths. Mono-ha can be ponderous, but Suga has a sense of humor, best seen here in dozens of small-scale assemblages, mounted on the walls. A scored block of blue wood, a punctured frame, a sequence of misaligned little planks: these intimate works are the impish cousins of the sculptural experiments of Hans Arp. Through Feb. 21. (Blum & Poe, 19 E. 66th St. 212-249-2249.)

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

Mamma Andersson

The poetic Swedish painter of folkish imagery in sophisticated styles fairly stuns with a museum-scaled show that includes two vast murals. Overlaying acrylic and oil paints and alternating drawn line with ruddy impasto, in colors that run to sumptuous grays and woody browns, Andersson invokes a world somewhere between the toy theatres of Ingmar Bergman's "Fanny and Alexander" and the worrisome enigmas of Neo Rauch. Her figures range from doll-like dancers to actual but hardly cuddly antique dolls. The murals depict them with laundry-filled clotheslines and other attributes of a fancied domesticity. To look at the work is to fall into rhythm with the fecund life of it. Through Feb. 14. (Zwirner, 519 W. 19th St. 212-517-8677.)

Jiri Georg Dokoupil

Whatever happened to the insolent whiz kid who, during the eighties, appeared more or less everywhere in the Cologne cohorts of neo-expressionist painters? In the twenty-five years since Dokoupil's last show in New York, this did: "Soap Bubble Paintings," made by bursting, on canvas, large bubbles impregnated with mostly metallic pigments and diamond dust. The wizardly technique yields gorgeous abstractions, usually on black grounds. You may hate yourself in advance for liking them, which you are pretty much doomed to do by the seductiveness of their infinitely varied tints and textures: shortcuts to the sublime. Through Feb. 7. (Kasmin, 515 W. 27th St. 212-563-4474.)

Benjamin Fredrickson

Any photographer of the homoerotic male nude must contend with the ghosts of Robert Mapplethorpe, Peter Hujar, and Jimmy De Sana, and this young New York artist, transplanted from Minnesota, takes all of them into account. He also taps into the rich history of private snapshots, in a series of little Polaroids. Cindy Sherman is clearly an influence as well, and there are several self-portraits here, but even the most calculated works are revealing. Over all, the balance of raunch and finesse is finely calibrated. Through Feb. 28. (Cooney, 508 W. 26th St. 212-255-8158.)

Luis Mallo

The Cuban photographer, who is now based in Brooklyn, turns ordinary streetscapes into intriguing abstractions by allowing chicken-wire fencing, construction netting, and billowing sheets of plastic to intrude on tidy urban geometries. In one image, black lines drawn on a white gate recall Robert Motherwell at his most restrained. But the artist who comes to mind most often in the presence of Mallo's work is Saul Leiter, who, like Mallo, sees the

city as a multilayered collage, full of texture and surprise. Through Feb. 21. (Praxis, 541 W. 25th St. 212-772-9478.)

Susan Philipsz

The Scottish sound artist presents a condensed but still satisfying version of her acclaimed "Part File Score," which debuted in Berlin last spring. The piece fills the gallery with the music of Hanns Eisler, whose atonal compositions Philipsz has apportioned among twelve speakers. (In Berlin, there were twenty-four.) On the walls are enlarged copies of Eisler's scores, interwoven with redacted material from his F.B.I. file: driven from Germany as a "degenerate" composer, he eventually ended up blacklisted in Los Angeles. Philipsz's incorporation of visual material lends her immersive sound installation a regrettably moralistic feel; still, the jittering violin lines transport you to an era when music was more difficult and surveillance was simpler. Through Feb. 14. (Bonakdar, 521 W. 21st St. 212-414-4144.)

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Lucy Skaer

Glasgow has been a hub for young British artists in the last decade, and Skaer, who flits from hulking stone sculptures to delicate works on paper, is one of the city's best. This exhibition (which has a counterpart at Murray Guy, in Chelsea) centers on three polished limestone boulders that were excavated from a quarry near the ghost town of Lithograph City, Iowa. On the walls are sparsely inked prints made from plates for recent front pages of the *Guardian*, as well as hundreds of richly glazed polyhedrons that Skaer sees as kin to the terra-cotta army in Xi'an. For all its inscrutability, Skaer's work does not shy away from the personal: three worn blocks of sandstone turn out to be steps from her childhood home. Through Feb. 21. (Freeman, 140 Grand St. 212-966-5154.)

"Castles Burning"

The lodestar of this melancholy exhibition is the Italian architect and glass artist Carlo Scarpa, whose bunkerlike Brion tomb, in Treviso, envisions both waking life and eternal rest as brutally spare. Scarpa's light-swallowing black vase from 1940 is attended by works from four downbeat young artists. The strongest of these is Sean Raspet, who places wall clocks into complex enclosures of mirrored Plexiglas, echoing Scarpa's mausoleum. A monochrome "painting" by Steven Baldi—in fact, the surface is black bookbinding cloth—similarly imbues the forms of modern architecture and geometric abstraction with Scarpian despond. Through Feb. 8. (Room East, 41 Orchard St. 212-226-7108.)



THE THEATRE

ALSO NOTABLE

ALADDIN

New Amsterdam

THE BOOK OF MORMON

Eugene O'Neill

CABARET

Studio 54

THE CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE DOG IN THE NIGHT-TIME

Ethel Barrymore

A DELICATE BALANCE

Golden

DISGRACED

Lyceum

THE ELEPHANT MAN

Booth

A GENTLEMAN'S GUIDE TO LOVE AND MURDER

Walter Kerr

HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH

Belasco

IF/THEN

Richard Rodgers

I'M GONNA PRAY FOR YOU SO HARD

Atlantic Stage 2

INTO THE WOODS

Laura Pels

IT'S ONLY A PLAY

Jacobs

THE LAST SHIP

Neil Simon. Through Jan. 24.

MATILDA THE MUSICAL

Shubert

LES MISÉRABLES

Imperial

ON THE TOWN

Lyric

THE RIVER

Circle in the Square

ROCK BOTTOM

Joe's Pub

SHESH YAK

Rattlestick

WICKED

Gershwin

WINNERS AND LOSERS

SoHo Rep

THE WOODSMAN

59E59

YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU

Longacre

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

Between Riverside and Crazy

Austin Pendleton directs the play by Stephen Adly Guirgis, which premiered at Atlantic Theatre Company last August, about a widower trying to hold on to his valuable rent-controlled apartment on the Upper West Side. Most of the original cast, including Stephen McKinley Henderson, Elizabeth Canavan, and Liza Colón-Zayas, returns. In previews. (Second Stage, 305 W. 43rd St. 212-246-4422.)

City Of

Stephen Brackett ("Buyer & Cellar") directs a new play by Anton Dudley, presented by the Playwrights Realm. The drama follows four Americans lost in the City of Light. Previews begin Jan. 27. (Peter Jay Sharp, 416 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

Da

Irish Rep presents this 1978 play by Hugh Leonard, directed by Charlotte Moore, in which a writer is haunted by the ghost of his father. In previews. Opens Jan. 22. (DR2, at 103 E. 15th St. 212-727-2737.)

The Golden Toad

At La Mama, the experimental theatre company Talking Band presents a play by the company members Ellen Maddow and Paul Zimet, with songs by Maddow and Elizabeth Swados, which follows a set of characters over several years. Previews begin Jan. 23. Opens Jan. 25. (Ellen Stewart, 66 E. 4th St. 646-430-5374.)

Hamilton

Lin-Manuel Miranda wrote this musical about Alexander Hamilton, in which the birth of America is presented as an immigrant story. Thomas Kail directs. In previews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 212-967-7555.)

Let the Right One In

John Tiffany directs the National Theatre of Scotland's production of the love story between an outcast boy and the vampire girl next door. With choreography by Steven Hoggett. In previews. Opens Jan. 25. (St. Ann's Warehouse, 29 Jay St., Brooklyn. 718-254-8779.)

Lionboy

The British company Complicite performs a show based on the novels by Zizou Corder, adapted by Marcelo Dos Santos, into a show with theatre, acrobats, and live percussion. Opens Jan. 23. (New Victory, 209 W. 42nd St. 646-223-3010.)

Little Children Dream of God

Jeff Augustin wrote this play, about a pregnant Haitian refugee who lands in Miami and forges a new community. Giovanna Sardelli directs the world premiere. Previews begin Jan. 24. (Roundabout Underground, 111 W. 46th St. 212-719-1300.)

A Month in the Country

Taylor Schilling, Peter Dinklage, Anthony Edwards, Annabella Sciorra, and Elizabeth Franz star in Ivan Turgenev's comedy from 1855, in which a woman falls in love with the tutor she has hired for her son. Erica Schmidt directs. In previews. (Classic Stage Company, 136 E. 13th St. 866-811-4111.)

Rasheeda Speaking

The New Group presents a play by Joel Drake Johnson, about a power struggle between two doctor's-office receptionists, one black, one white. Dianne Wiest and Tonya Pinkins star in Cynthia Nixon's directorial debut. Previews begin Jan. 27. (Pershing Square Signature Center, 480 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

The Road to Damascus

As part of the 5A series at 59E59, Michael Parva directs a play by Tom Dulack, in which the Pope is African, and a third-party President must decide how to handle a war in Syria. In previews. (59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.)

NOW PLAYING

A Beautiful Day in November on the Banks of the Greatest of the Great Lakes

In this New Georges production (in association with Women's Project Theatre) of Kate Benson's dark comedy, three wacky sisters with obsessive-compulsive disorder (Brooke Ishibashi, Heather Alicia Simms, and Nina Hellman) anxiously prepare Thanksgiving dinner for their cartoonish extended family, while two sportscasters (Hubert Point-Du Jour and Ben Williams) narrate the event as if it were a football game. An invisible tabletop is futzed with, a turkey is turned in the oven, some babies are heard crying—these things are all treated like the hugest of potential disasters, many of them pantomimed, many in slow motion. Under the direction of Lee Sunday Evans, Benson's first play is inventive and weirdly funny, if superficial. (City Center Stage II, 131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212.)

Constellations

The young English playwright Nick Payne had a good idea—to represent the life of a relationship in flashes and not necessarily in order. It's relatively rare to find this kind of adventurousness onstage; for the most part, Western narratives are still fairly traditional, with a beginning, middle, and end. Roland (Jake Gyllenhaal) and Marianne (Ruth Wilson) stand on a small stage surrounded by balloons—the "multiverse" the play is set in. Even though the couple have British accents, one is meant to understand that they are like any two people in

the world coming together romantically, struggling to survive, and then meeting the sort of end that is familiar to fans of "Love Story": Marianne's fatal cancer puts a stop to all the fighting that goes into making any relationship work, and the humor, too. Wilson is a quicker actor than Gyllenhaal—she's a more relaxed comedian—but the pair are fine together, and Gyllenhaal likes playing against her. The problem is the play. Payne has put technique before emotional substance. Even though it's only seventy minutes long, you might want this slight piece to be over about halfway through, because it's an exercise in playwriting, not a play. (Samuel J. Friedman, 261 W. 47th St. 212-239-6200.)

Ham: A Musical Memoir

Like an "It Gets Better" video with occasional snatches of song, Sam Harris's honey-glazed autobiography details his journey from humble origins to statuette-clutching self-acceptance. Under Billy Porter's direction, the show opens with a flashy ode to overemoting that name-checks at least a dozen preparations of pork. (Actors: the other white meat?) Then it shifts to Harris's unhappy childhood in Sand Springs, Oklahoma, and his first taste of the limelight—applying brown makeup at age five to play a Polynesian kid in "South Pacific." More questionable casting follows, as does adolescent romance, several house fires, a suicide attempt, a legendary run on "Star Search," and, finally, contentment as a gay dad. There's no reason to doubt the authenticity of Harris's sentiments, but he's such a practiced actor—smooth of voice, smoother of face—that even the darkest and most joyful moments of "Ham" can seem canned. (Ars Nova, 511 W. 54th St. 212-352-3101. Through Jan. 24.)

Honeymoon in Vegas

Continuing Broadway's habit of musicalizing movies that weren't "Casablanca" to begin with (see "The Wedding Singer"), Andrew Bergman has adapted his funny-enough 1992 comedy, with music and lyrics by Jason Robert Brown. The plot is screwball "Indecent Proposal": when Jack (the rubbery Rob McClure) and Betsy (Brynn O'Malley) fly to Vegas to elope, Jack loses big at a poker game to an oily high roller (Tony Danza), who trades his winnings for a weekend with Betsy. (Somehow the climax involves a plane full of flying Elvises.) Like Brown's tuneful score, Gary Griffin's staging is as bright and synthetic as Caesars Palace, with welcome intrusions by Nancy Opel, as Jack's dead mother. Danza is no crooner, but his second-act tap-dancing solo is an unexpected trump card. (Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 866-870-2717.)

NIGHT LIFE

ROCK AND POP

Musicians and night-club proprietors lead complicated lives; it's advisable to check in advance to confirm engagements.

Amen Dunes

Damon McMahon, the bed-headed singer-songwriter, guitarist, and part-time journalist who fronts this remarkable project, finds a rare moment at home to celebrate a new EP on Sacred Bones Records, out this week. "Cowboy Worship" is an aptly named counterpart to the warbling, introverted folk McMahon has been perfecting over the past decade. For this material, a companion to the album "Love," from 2014, he recruited a few mainstays of the Brooklyn underground scene (including the talented guitarist and producer Ben Greenberg, and Stephen Tanner, of Harvey Milk), so a special guest or two might join him. (Bowery Ballroom, 6 Delancey St. 212-533-2111. Jan. 22.)

Alejandro Escovedo

In 2003, this Texas-born and Austin-based rocker collapsed onstage and then faced a long, arduous recovery from hepatitis C. To help defray the costs, some of his many friends and admirers—including Steve Earle, Lucinda Williams, John Cale, and Jennifer Warnes—started putting on benefit shows, and then recorded a tribute album of his songs, entitled "Por Vida." By 2011, he was back in fighting form, and that year he played three nights at the Rubin Museum, performing a different program each evening, in an acoustic setting. Escovedo has a similar game plan in place for this run at the City Winery—he'll do his first two solo releases, "Gravity" (1992) and "Thirteen Years" (1994) on Thursday and Friday, then "With These Hands" (1996) on Saturday—only this time in full rock mode. (155 Varick St. 212-608-0555. Jan. 22-24.)

Liam Hayes

For the past twenty years, this Chicago-based singer, guitarist, and pianist has crafted multifarious chamber-pop albums as the leader of a group called Plush. He appeared as himself in the movie "High Fidelity" (2000), and two years ago scored Roman Coppola's "A Glimpse Inside the Mind of Charles Swan III," which starred Charlie Sheen. His first album in five years, "Slurrup," came out earlier this month, and he's touring with the same three-piece that recorded it, bringing his gospel of melody and sonic invention to select cities across the nation. (Mercury Lounge, 217 E. Houston St. 212-260-4700. Jan. 25.)

London Grammar

Hannah Reid, Dan Rothman, and Dominic (Dot) Major formed this act some six years ago while students at Nottingham University. Soon after completing their studies, the trio signed to the label Ministry of Sound and recorded their first album, "If You Wait," a superbly moody collection of trip-hop. Released late in 2013, it rocketed the band to success. The sudden fame seems to have slightly spooked the outfit—in particular the mesmerizing front woman Reid, who suffers

from stage fright—but their reaction only adds to their introspective charm. (Terminal 5, 610 W. 56th St. 212-582-6600. Jan. 27.)

Sylvan Esso

This blippy electro-folk duo, which hails from the unexpectedly hip North Carolina Research Triangle, has been riding a steady wave of success from their 2013 single "Hey Mami," a snaky ode to wolf whistling that landed them a record deal and legions of young devotees. They've yet to top that achievement (although last year's "Coffee," off their self-titled debut album, came close), but it's worth staying tuned for their next move. (Terminal 5, 610 W. 56th St. 212-582-6600. Jan. 23.)

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

Jimmy Cobb

The shrewd and subtle drummer who is the last surviving band member to have played on the world's most famous jazz album, "Kind of Blue," is a conjurer who implies intensity, rather than stating it outright. In celebration of his eighty-fifth birthday, Cobb brings together a quartet featuring the guitarist **Peter Bernstein** and the pianist **Richard Wyands** which will spotlight the leader's undiminished skills. (Smoke, 2751 Broadway, between 105th and 106th Sts. 212-864-6662. Jan. 23-25.)

Fred Hersch

For the concluding half of his two-week run at the Village Vanguard, the acclaimed pianist leaves his expanded ensemble at home and goes solo. Alone with his instrument, Hersch freely partakes of the lyrical wellspring that fortifies his improvising. The Vanguard holds a special place in Hersch's heart: he's recorded three live albums there and was the first solo pianist to headline the hallowed club. (178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. 212-255-4037. Jan. 20-25.)

Sally Kellerman

Perhaps best remembered as a muse for the director Robert Altman in "M*A*S*H" and "Brewster McCloud," Kellerman has a memorably throaty speaking voice that approaches music, and an interest in singing that stretches back to the same decade as her cinematic breakthrough—her first LP, "Roll with the Feelin'," came out in 1972. On her album "Sally," which came out six years ago, she takes on classics by Nina Simone, Leiber and Stoller, Screamin' Jay Hawkins, and others. (54 Below, 254 W. 54th St. 646-476-3551. Jan. 23.)

Pat Martino Organ Trio and Larry Coryell-Vic Juris Duo

There will be no shortage of finger-flying fret work at this double bill. Martino revisits and extends his musical roots with his organ trio, while Coryell, a fusion pioneer who also honors the jazz tradition, delivers duets with the fine, underrated guitarist Juris. All three are veteran players whose foundations in bebop lend authenticity to their vibrant improvising. (Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St. 212-475-8592. Jan. 20-25.)

92Y

Highlights

Talks



Jeremy Denk and Ian Bostridge
SUN, FEB 1

"Better Call Saul": Bob Odenkirk, Michael McKean and Jonathan Banks
in Conversation
THU, FEB 5



David Axelrod and David Remnick
TUE, FEB 10

Allison Williams
in Conversation with **Seth Meyers**
WED, FEB 18



Thomas Piketty, Paul Krugman and Joseph Stiglitz
WED, MAR 4



Hilary Mantel
SUN, MAR 8

Malcolm Gladwell
TUE, APR 7

Candice Bergen
WED, APR 8

Readings



Richard Ford and Lorrie Moore
THU, FEB 12

Kazuo Ishiguro and Caryl Phillips
WED, MAR 18



Etgar Keret in Conversation with **James Snyder**
THUR, MAR 19

Toni Morrison
MON, APR 27

Performances

Shai Wosner and the Parker Quartet: The Schubert Effect
WED, JAN 28, PART 1
SUN, FEB 1, PART 2

Jennifer Koh, violin
SAT, JAN, 31

Voigt Lessons
Starring **Deborah Voigt**
Music Direction by Kevin Stites
Co-Creators: Terrence McNally, Francesca Zambello & Deborah Voigt
THU, FEB 26



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Anna Netrebko takes the title role in the Met première of Tchaikovsky's last opera, "Iolanta."

OUT OF DARKNESS

The Metropolitan Opera pairs "Iolanta" with "Bluebeard's Castle."

BARTÓK'S "BLUEBEARD'S CASTLE" was last unveiled at the Metropolitan Opera in 1989. It was paired with Schoenberg's "Erwartung," another one-act opera at the core of the modern repertory—and a choice that reflected the late eighties' fascination with the psychology and culture of fin-de-siècle Vienna. "Bluebeard" returns this week, but in a radically different context; it will be paired with the Met première of Tchaikovsky's "Iolanta," the composer's final opera and among his least well known.

"Iolanta" premiered in 1892 as half of the most famous double bill in Russian music history, sharing the stage with a larger Tchaikovsky work: "The Nutcracker," which has gone on to a more celebrated afterlife. That ballet explores the innocent world of children; the opera centers on Iolanta, the young daughter of a king, who has been kept in ignorance of the fact that she is blind, because of her father's fear of making her unhappy. The composer himself was not entirely pleased with the results ("Medieval dukes and knights and ladies capture my imagination but not my heart," he wrote to a colleague), but at its best the score gives off a secretive, radiant beauty that the production's big stars, the soprano Anna Netrebko, the tenor Piotr Beczala, and the conductor Valery Gergiev, are well suited to exploit.

The Polish filmmaker Mariusz Trelński, making a Met début of his own, as director, has said that his aesthetic for both operas will come from an unexpected source: nineteen-forties Hollywood thrillers and film noir (such as Hitchcock's "Rebecca"), movies in which violence and repressed sexuality simmer just beneath the surface. In Trelński's view, the two operas can be interpreted as different phases in the life of one woman. Iolanta emerges out of darkness—and innocence—into light and love; Duke Bluebeard (sung by Mikhail Petrenko) imprisons his new wife, Judith (Nadja Michael), throwing her back into darkness after she demands to know what terrible secrets lie beyond the seven doors of his sepulchral fortress. Bartók's opera, written in 1911, premiered in 1918, by which time Europe had suffered all the darkness it could stand.

—Russell Platt



CLASSICAL MUSIC

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera

With his Roman glamour and pretty, sometimes tremulous voice, the tenor Vittorio Grigolo bounds onstage in the current revival of Offenbach's "Les Contes d'Hoffmann" looking as though he's taken a wrong turn out of a Donizetti comedy and into the angsty world of the titular alcoholic poet. But Grigolo works hard to overcome type, with thrilling singing and an impetuous, charismatic portrayal. Bartlett Sher's overstuffed production nonetheless tells the story, as the Four Villains (a campy Thomas Hampson) and Hoffmann's Muse (the taut, transfixing Kate Lindsey) guide the poet out of his romantic entanglements with Antonia (Hibla Gerzmava), Giulietta (Christine Rice), and Olympia (a sparkling Erin Morley) and back to his art. Yves Abel follows the euphoric highs and swooping lows of Hoffmann's escapades in the pit. (Jan. 22 and Jan. 27 at 7:30.) • **Also playing:** A revival of Willy Decker's bracing modern-style Salzburg Festival production of "La Traviata" features three notable younger artists, Sonya Yoncheva, Francesco Demuro, and Aleksei Markov, in the leading roles; Marco Armiliato conducts. (Jan. 21 and Jan. 24 at 8.) • The Met has replaced the complex Continental charm of Tim Albery's 2000 production of "The Merry Widow" with the high-stepping, all-American good cheer of the choreographer and director Susan Stroman's new version, which opened on New Year's Eve. Stroman's transformation succeeds most with those who are best suited to it: the Broadway star Kelli O'Hara (in a solid Met début), in the role of Valencienne; the suave and versatile baritone Nathan Gunn, as Danilo; the venerable Thomas Allen, as winning as ever in the buffo role of Baron Zeta; and, not least, a captivating troupe of singing, dancing Grisettes. The glamorous Renée Fleming takes the title role; Paul Nadler. (Jan. 23 at 7:30.) • The season's final performance of "La Bohème" features the estimable Kristine Opolais, Marina Rebeka, Jean-François Borras, and Mariusz Kwiecien in the leading roles; Riccardo Frizza. (Jan. 24 at 1.) • Valery Gergiev, the paramount Russian conductor of our time, leads the (arguably overdue) Met

première of Tchaikovsky's "Iolanta" as a prelude to a work with a substantial Met provenance, Bartók's "Bluebeard's Castle." Anna Netrebko, Piotr Beczala, and Aleksei Markov take the leading roles in the first work; Mikhail Petrenko and Nadja Michael portray Duke Bluebeard and his doomed wife. (Jan. 26 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 212-362-6000.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic

A decade ago, Maxim Vengerov, a stupendous Russian virtuoso, stood unchallenged as the most exciting young violinist in the world. Then came several years of wanderlust, impelled by injury, malaise, and new interests in teaching and conducting. Having returned to the violin in 2011, he makes his first visit to the Philharmonic in nine years, performing the Tchaikovsky Concerto, with Long Yu conducting; Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony completes the program. (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-875-5656. Jan. 22 at 7:30 and Jan. 23-24 at 8.)

Budapest Festival Orchestra

If anyone can give a Mozart-Brahms program a new perspective, it is Iván Fischer and his brave-hearted orchestra. From Mozart comes the seraphic "Magic Flute" Overture and the rambunctious Violin Concerto No. 5, "Turkish" (with Pinchas Zukerman); from Brahms, the titanic Symphony No. 1 in C Minor. (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-721-6500. Jan. 21 at 8.)

"Ekmeles Sings American Composers"

The recently established chorus, fearless (and sharp-eared) advocates for new music, sing pieces by two august figures in the North American microtonal movement, Ben Johnston ("Sonnets of Desolation," settings of poems by Gerard Manley Hopkins) and the late James Tenney, as well as works by such talented younger artists as Matthew Ricketts, Aaron Cassidy, and Andrew Waggoner. (DiMenna Center, 450 W. 37th St. Jan. 23 at 7:30. Tickets at the door.)

"Focus! 2015: Japanese Music Since 1945"

Every winter, Joel Sachs and his New Juilliard Ensemble shake up the new-music scene with concerts that combine fresh works with explorations of cultural heritage. This year the subject is Japan; the series begins with Sachs leading music for chamber orchestra by Toshio Hosokawa, Michio Mamiya, Somei Satoh ("The Last Song," with the baritone Christopher Dylan Herbert), and others. (Peter Jay Sharp Theatre, Juilliard School. Jan. 23 at 8. To reserve free tickets, visit events.juilliard.edu.)

Mariinsky Orchestra

Shostakovich's Fourth Symphony (1936), a work of searing greatness, suffered a quarter century of neglect because of the murderous cultural machinations of Stalin's Russia. This week, in a concert that many will regard as tinged with irony, Valery Gergiev will conduct the piece at a time when his closeness to another Russian strongman, Vladimir Putin, has become an increasingly difficult subject. He and his magnificent orchestra begin the program with Prokofiev's glittering Third Piano Concerto (with Bezhod Abduraimov). (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. Jan. 27 at 8.)

RECITALS

Music at the Metropolitan Museum: "The Grand Tour"

These concerts, which offer topnotch performances of Renaissance and Baroque music in the museum's site-appropriate galleries, were a smash hit when they debuted last season. This time around, the audience will move from room to room to hear

Ensemble Viscera, TENET, the Baroque triple harpist Paula Fagerberg, and the assorted instrumentalists of Ciaramella perform music from, respectively, sixteenth-century Spain, late-Renaissance Italy, Baroque Britain, and the Dutch Golden Age of Rembrandt, Bruegel, and Vermeer. (Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. 212-570-3949. Jan. 21-22 at 8.)

Gidon Kremer and Daniil Trifonov

New York's big week of Russian music embraces political contradictions. Gergiev is a supporter of Vladimir Putin; Kremer, the Latvian violin legend and former longtime Moscow resident, has been a vituperative critic of the regime. His concert with Trifonov—a brilliant young Russian pianist whose stature may eventually match that of his older colleague—is suffused with the dulcet sounds of Mozart and Schubert (the Fantasy in C Major, D. 934) as well as the more anguished sonorities of Mieczyslaw Weinberg, a Jewish Polish-Soviet composer who was a close friend of Shostakovich. (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. Jan. 23 at 8.)

St. Lawrence String Quartet

Baby boomers have the Emerson String Quartet; Gen X-ers have the St. Lawrence, a group whose combination of deep musicianship and edge-of-the-seat excitement makes it pretty much unbeatable. Its sole New York appearance of the season is at the Baryshnikov Arts Center, with two great quartets by Haydn (including "The Joke," Op. 33, No. 2) bookending a brand-new piece by Stanford's Jonathan Berger. (450 W. 37th St. bacnyc.org. Jan. 24 at 8.)

Jonathan Biss

Biss, a probing pianist from a distinguished musical family, always offers thoughtful programs. His only New York recital this season includes sonatas and other works by Beethoven, Schoenberg (Six Little Piano Pieces, Op. 19), Schumann ("Waldszenen"), and Berg. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500. Jan. 24 at 8.)

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center: Amphion String Quartet

One of America's finest young string quartets appears under the Society's auspices this week in a program that features quartets spanning the Classical, Romantic, and modern eras, by Haydn, Janáček (No. 2, "Intimate Letters"), and Grieg (the impassioned, and influential, Quartet in G Minor). (Alice Tully Hall. 212-875-5788. Jan. 25 at 5.)

Music Mondays: "The Debussy Six"

The intriguing series of free concerts offers an especially interesting evening, a program featuring not only the three sonatas for "diverse instruments" that Claude Debussy lived to complete (for Violin and Piano, Cello and Piano, and Flute, Viola, and Harp) but also contemporary works designed to complete the Master's plan, by Thomas Adès ("Sonata da Caccia," for oboe, horn, and harpsichord), Mark-André Dalbavie, and Libby Larsen (who will be on hand to discuss her piece). The superb performers include the harpist Bridget Kibbey and the violinist Jesse Mills. (Advent Lutheran Church, Broadway at 93rd St. Jan. 26 at 7:30. No tickets required.)

Alexandre Tharaud

The elegantly meticulous French pianist, well known for his contribution to Michael Haneke's film "Amour," comes to Zankel Hall to perform a solo recital that ranges from the world of the French Baroque (a suite of Couperin's "Pièces de Clavecin") to that of Biedermeier Vienna (Schubert's German Dances, D. 783, and Beethoven's Sonata in A-Flat Major, Op. 110). (212-247-7800. Jan. 27 at 7:30.)

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DANCE

New York City Ballet

The company's six-week winter season offers the usual combo of new ballets, revivals, and hardy perennials. In his new work "Rodeo," Justin Peck revisits Aaron Copland's rollicking score, while discarding Agnes de Mille's old-fashioned Western love story. Alexei Ratmansky's vivid, super-imaginative Mussorgsky ballet, "Pictures at an Exhibition," from last fall, returns, as does the seldom seen "Goldberg Variations," by Jerome Robbins. Even more rarely performed is Balanchine's two-act commedia-dell'arte ballet "Harlequinade." Week one is dominated by Balanchine works, including the evergreens "Serenade," "Agon," and "La Valse." "Hear the Dance: Russia" combines ballets by Balanchine, Jerome Robbins, and Peter Martins, all driven by Russian music. Balanchine's "Cortège Hongrois," set to excerpts from the nineteenth-century "Raymonda," is the highlight, with its thrilling mix of Hungarian-tinged dances—think ribbons and boots—and classical style. • Jan. 20 at 7:30, Jan. 24 at 8, and Jan. 25 at 3: "Serenade," "Agon," and "Symphony in C." • Jan. 21 and Jan. 27 at 7:30 and Jan. 23 at 8: "Symphonic Dances," "The Cage," "Andantino," and "Cortège Hongrois." • Jan. 22 at 7:30 and Jan. 24 at 2: "Donizetti Variations,"



ABOVE & BEYOND

CelebrASIA's New Year Festivities for Families

A giant ball descending a flagpole, a midnight kiss, and an off-key rendition of "Auld Lang Syne": American New Year's traditions have their charm, but that's not the end of the story. For the fifth year in a row, CelebrASIA, a collaboration among local cultural institutions, is bringing a diverse set of family-friendly celebrations to New Yorkers, including ones observing the Korean New Year, the Chinese New Year, the Himalayan New Year, and the Persian New Year. Kicking things off is "Oshogatsu," at the Japan Society on Jan. 25 from 2 to 4, in which visitors usher in the Year of the Sheep with interactive activities such as *takoage*, kite-making; *kakizome*, New Year's calligraphy; *fukuwara*, a game in which blindfolded players place facial features on a blank face; traditional *taiko* drumming lessons; and the ancient art of pounding rice dough with a large ceremonial mallet. Who needs black-eyed peas when there's *mochi*, the Japanese rice cake? (celebrasia.org. Through March 21.)

"La Valse," and "Chaconne." (David H. Koch, Lincoln Center. 212-496-0600. Through March 1.)

Mariinsky Ballet

The fabled company, based in St. Petersburg, presents "Swan Lake" (Jan. 21-23) and a program (Jan. 24-25) that comprises three ballets set to music by Chopin: the moonlit reverie "Chopiniana," created by Michel Fokine in 1908; Jerome Robbins's "In the Night"; and a recent work by Benjamin Millepied, "Without." The main attraction is an exquisite lineup of ballerinas, including Diana Vishneva, Yekaterina Kondourova (a.k.a. Big Red), Viktoria Tereshkina, and Ulyana Lopatkina (a national icon)—not to mention the impeccable corps de ballet, who transform the lakeside acts of "Swan Lake" into a dreamlike elegy. (BAM's Howard Gilman Opera House, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn. 718-636-4100. Jan. 21-25.)

Parsons Dance

David Parsons, whose reliably well-crafted, crowd-pleasing dances rarely rise to the level of inspired artistry, is generous in giving chances to others. Years ago, he presented the first pieces by Robert Battle, then a company member, who went on to found his own company and ascend to the directorship of the Alvin Ailey troupe. This season, Battle returns the favor with his 2008 work "Train," while another former company member, Natalie Lomonte, gets her first choreographic shot. Parsons himself contributes "Whirlaway," a première set to recordings by the great Allen Toussaint. There's also "Hymn," a duet by Trey McIntyre, a choreographer who's a cut above the others. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 212-242-0800. Jan. 21-25 and Jan. 27. Through Feb. 1.)

FLICfest

Now in its fifth year, the "Feature Length Independent Choreography" festival narrows its

New York Boat Show

The New York Fire Department, which has more than twenty vessels to cover the city's five hundred and twenty miles of coastline, is celebrating its sesquicentennial at this year's show. Firefighters will be on hand to discuss the department's history, and there will be opportunities to win a ride on a fireboat. Of course, hundreds of fibreglass wonders, from motor yachts to sailboats, will also be on display. (Javits Center, 655 W. 34th St. nyboatshow.com. Jan. 21-25.)

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

For the next ten days (Jan. 23-Feb. 1), New Yorkers can liven up the winter doldrums with a ramble through the stalls of the **Winter Antiques Show** at the Park Avenue Armory. One of the fair's principal pleasures is its eclecticism, as astrolabes share the floor with pre-Columbian ceramics, illuminated texts, and vintage parures. (Park Ave. at 66th St. 718-665-5250.) • It's Americana week at the auction houses, which means that for the next few days, auction halls will be crammed with Chippendale chests, Bostonian silver, and the odd copper weathervane. **Christie's** starts off with a sale of silver on Jan. 22 which includes a teapot made by Paul Revere, before moving on to a large offering of furnishings and folk art on Jan. 23. An auction devoted to export china (Jan. 26) contains porcelains in every conceivable shape, including a tureen in the form of a tree shrew, an animal with strangely ratlike features. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 212-636-2000.) • Pieces from the private

focus. Rather than present twelve choreographers or companies, as in previous installments, it sticks with six, two per evening, and gives each an encore performance the following weekend. "PaperPieces," in which the always vibrant Nicole Wolcott veers between emotional extremes amid sheets of newspaper, should be a highlight. (Irondale Center, 85 S. Oxford St., Brooklyn. 866-811-4111. Jan. 22-24. Through Jan. 31.)

"Remy Charlip I Love You"

In this informal performance and talk, a group of dancers and choreographers whose work spans a good half century will present short works by Remy Charlip. A founding member of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company and a much loved figure of the experimental dance scene, Charlip wrote and illustrated children's books and created whimsical dance miniatures, improvisations based on simple instructions, drawings, and odd situations. These will be performed by the witty David Vaughan (a dance historian and a onetime actor), Arthur Aviles (a former member of Bill T. Jones and a choreographer), Aileen Passloff, and others. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500. Jan. 23.)

Robyn Orlin / Compagnie Jant-Bi

With its wordy title, "At the Same Time We Were Pointing a Finger at You, We Realized We Were Pointing Three at Ourselves" might be expressing the anxiety of Orlin, a white South African choreographer, as she crossed several kinds of borders to make a work for Jant-Bi, a troupe of black Senegalese men. Drawing on a rite of passage that addresses the fear of lions, the work breaks cultural taboos in having the men tell stories from their childhoods. (Alexander Kasser Theatre, 1 Normal Ave., Montclair, N.J. 973-655-5112. Jan. 24-25. Through Feb. 1.)

collection of Roy and Ruth Nutt dominate the American sales at **Sotheby's** (Jan. 23-25). Nutt, a pioneer in computing who contributed to the invention of one of the first languages used for programming, FORTRAN, was an eclectic collector whose enthusiasms included needlework samplers, porcelain mugs, and paintings. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 212-606-7000.)

READINGS AND TALKS

Thalia Kids Book Club

Natalie Babbitt marks the fortieth anniversary of her novel "Tuck Everlasting" by joining Gregory Maguire ("Wicked") and the actress Alexis Bledel, who portrayed the book's heroine in the movie version, from 2002, for a discussion. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. symphonyspace.org. Jan. 25 at 1.)

"Guantánamo Diary"

PEN American Center, in partnership with the American Civil Liberties Union, presents a reading from the first and only diary by an imprisoned Guantánamo detainee to be released publicly, written by Mohamedou Ould Slahi. Michael Cunningham, Joshua Ferris, Nicole Krauss, Francine Prose, Douglas Rushkoff, Luc Sante, Molly Crabapple, and Lili Taylor will read from the book. Philip Gourevitch will then moderate a conversation with Larry Siems, who edited it; Nancy Hollander, a lead attorney for Slahi; the film director Doug Liman; and others. (Culture Project at Lynn Redgrave Theatre, 45 Bleecker St. pen.org. Jan. 26 at 7.)




FOOD & DRINK

BAR TAB BILLYMARK'S WEST

332 Ninth Ave. (212-629-0018)

"Did you ever see lights hung like that?" Benny the bartender asked, gesturing with a Miller High Life at some flaccid trimming. "I'm afraid our interior decorator could use some help—looks like he stood outside and threw them in." Billymark's West is as grubby as the Golem and, in New York bar years, almost as old. Above a mailbox-blue brick façade appears the claim "EST 1956"; in 1999, the brothers Billy and Mark Penza took over. Patrons drop by from Penn Station, Chelsea's art galleries, and the U.S. Postal Service plant, 8 A.M. to 4 A.M., three hundred and sixty-five days a year, for cheap shots, bottled beer (no taps), and mixed drinks in glass mugs. There's a presiding sense that what goes up on the walls never comes down—behind the pool table, Matisse dancers about a Texas Tech flag; by the register, Captain America borders Bob Knight throwing a chair. Stern words are dispensed to brawlers and welshers (aspiring drinker: "I promise I'll leave you fifteen on the register when I get paid!" Benny: "You should be *ashamed*"). But Benny had a generous pour and slightly kinder words for a woman wearing Christian Louboutins, equal in value to a hundred and sixty-nine Millers: "You're a very agreeable woman, but you gotta be careful with women who are too agreeable." Scattered signage reiterates Billymark's motto, "Love this bar," leaving very little room for disagreement.

—Emma Allen



TABLES FOR TWO

THE EDDY

342 E. 6th St. (646-895-9884)

IF YOU WERE AROUND for the heyday, in the eighties and nineties, of Indian row, on East Sixth Street in the East Village, you probably experienced a birthday party at the shabby jewel box Rose of India—a fleeting, euphoric assault of blaring electric sitar, thousands of flashing Christmas lights, and a six-dollar chana saag. Amid the several remaining curry joints on that block is an unexpected gem, serving nothing curried whatsoever. The Eddy is a pretty little place with white walls, candlelight, garden-inspired dishes, and an anachronistic sense of romance.

The food, however, is modern, and leans toward cerebral. A concise, often changing à-la-carte menu (there is also a sixty-five-dollar tasting-menu option) features bar snacks that are ingenious refinements of junk food. The chef, Brendan McHale, who once cooked at the well-regarded (now defunct) Jack's Luxury Oyster Bar, fries beef tendon and fills it with charred-onion cream and generous dollops of trout roe. It puffs up like chicharrón, or, according to one new beef-tendon convert, like a Funyun. Bacon bits liven up regulation tater tots topped with mustard and pea purée, and apple-ginger ice turns Wellfleet oysters into ice pops: crunchy, creamy, tart, sweet. Salmon rillettes (the salmon is cured in salt and Lapsang tea, cooked in olive oil, and mixed with tarragon, dill, lemon zest, and chili pepper) come in a tiny jar alongside perfectly fried potato skins that are dusted with some crazy homemade cool-ranch-flavored powder.

For the appetizers, there's a formula: take a dish with several strong elements and add one more. Usually that doesn't work, but at the Eddy—with the octopus, the scallop crudo, the burrata—it does. In a town lousy with burrata, McHale's, which is piled with super-sweet maple-glazed squash wedges, doused in an otherworldly verdant oil made of anise hyssop, and topped with pepitas, might be the best right now. The entrées can be hit-or-miss. A tea-smoked duck was too rare, and cut too thick to handle politely; the arctic char was too sweet with parsnips and sunchokes. Rib eye, oddly piled on one side of an otherwise empty plate, was satisfyingly smothered in St. Albay fondue. The best might be the vegetarian option, a plate of huge ricotta-filled gnocchi, fried in brown butter and surrounded by mushrooms, cubes of squash, and pistachios.

Here's another formula: savvy, mannerly servers, fussy cocktails with vaguely British names and lots of citrus peel, a room quiet enough for conversation. Kelvin Uffre, the bartender who developed the cocktails—the Morgan Le Fay, the Parlor Friar II—likes to put on a show of ambidexterity, pouring two drinks at a time from up high into heavy cut glass. He does this in the small front room as it packs full of young people. It feels like a fun, fancy living-room party, and, who knows, maybe it's somebody's birthday.

—Shauna Lyon

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THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT

A PRESIDENT AND A KING

In June of 2009, when an aura of idealism still attended Barack Obama's Presidency, he delivered a speech at Cairo University that was intended to recalibrate American relations in the region. He had already offered a qualified overture in his Inaugural Address—"We will extend a hand if you are willing to unclench your fist"—and the Cairo speech elucidated a vision of American soft power and democratic progress. Some listeners also noted a bit of historical jujitsu. In making a case for nonviolence in the region, the President remarked:

For centuries, black people in America suffered the lash of the whip as slaves, and the humiliation of segregation. But it was not violence that won full and equal rights. It was a peaceful and determined insistence upon the ideals at the center of America's founding. This same story can be told by people from South Africa to South Asia; from Eastern Europe to Indonesia. It's a story with a simple truth: that violence is a dead end.

Obama elided a few examples to make his argument: the more than six hundred thousand Civil War deaths in the United States; the well-documented though lesser-known history of armed black self-defense in the early twentieth century, which, in the eyes of many, served to make the nonviolent movement a palatable alternative; the armed resistance to apartheid that, for a time, counted even Nelson Mandela among its numbers. But fidelity to the historical record was not the key point.

There are more than six hundred and fifty streets named for Martin Luther King, Jr., in the United States, but, perhaps more significant, there are streets, parks, and monuments dedicated to him in Australia, Austria, France, Germany, India, Israel, Italy, Senegal, South Africa, and Zambia—a reminder that not only American authority but also American contradictions play out on the world stage. Cairo represented a moment in which the nation's history of racism, long its most obvious moral contradiction and the so-called Achilles' heel of American foreign policy, was, in the hands of a black President, an element to be used to America's advantage. Obama's mere

existence was a brief for a kind of American exceptionalism. The credibility of his words derived less from the office he held than from his affiliation with the nonviolent movement that had made it possible for him to attain it.

From the moment Obama emerged as a serious Presidential contender, he has been viewed as a symbol of the successes of King and the movement that he led. Early in the campaign, when some African-Americans still harbored doubts about Obama's identity, he travelled to Selma to mark the anniversary of the Bloody Sunday march and to talk explicitly about the ways in which the movement had made it possible for the union between his black Kenyan father and his white American mother to exist legally. His nomination, at the Democratic Convention in August of 2008, coincided with the forty-fifth anniversary of King's "Dream" speech. After the election, cartoonists deployed King in all manner of celebratory endorsement, and, after the Inauguration, Obama placed a bust of King in the Oval Office. Next week, he will deliver his sixth State of the Union address, as he did his first inaugural, a day after the holiday that commemorates King.

Yet six years in the White House have vastly complicated Obama's relationship to King. They are two of the three African-Americans who have won the Nobel Peace Prize. (The first, Ralph Bunche, was awarded the prize in 1950, for negotiating a truce between Jews and Arabs in 1949.) When King accepted his award, in 1964, he began his speech by questioning his worthiness as a recipient, since the movement he led had not yet achieved interracial peace:

I conclude that this award which I receive on behalf of that movement is a profound recognition that nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral question of our time: the need for man to overcome oppression and violence without resorting to violence and oppression. Civilization and violence are antithetical concepts.

Obama opened his acceptance speech, in 2009, on a similarly self-effacing note, stating that he had barely



begun his Presidency and his achievements were few. But then he departed from King's reasoning. There is such a thing as just war, he said, under circumstances in which force is used in self-defense, is proportional to the threat, and, "whenever possible, civilians are spared from violence." He continued:

I face the world as it is, and cannot stand idle in the face of threats to the American people. For make no mistake: Evil does exist in the world.

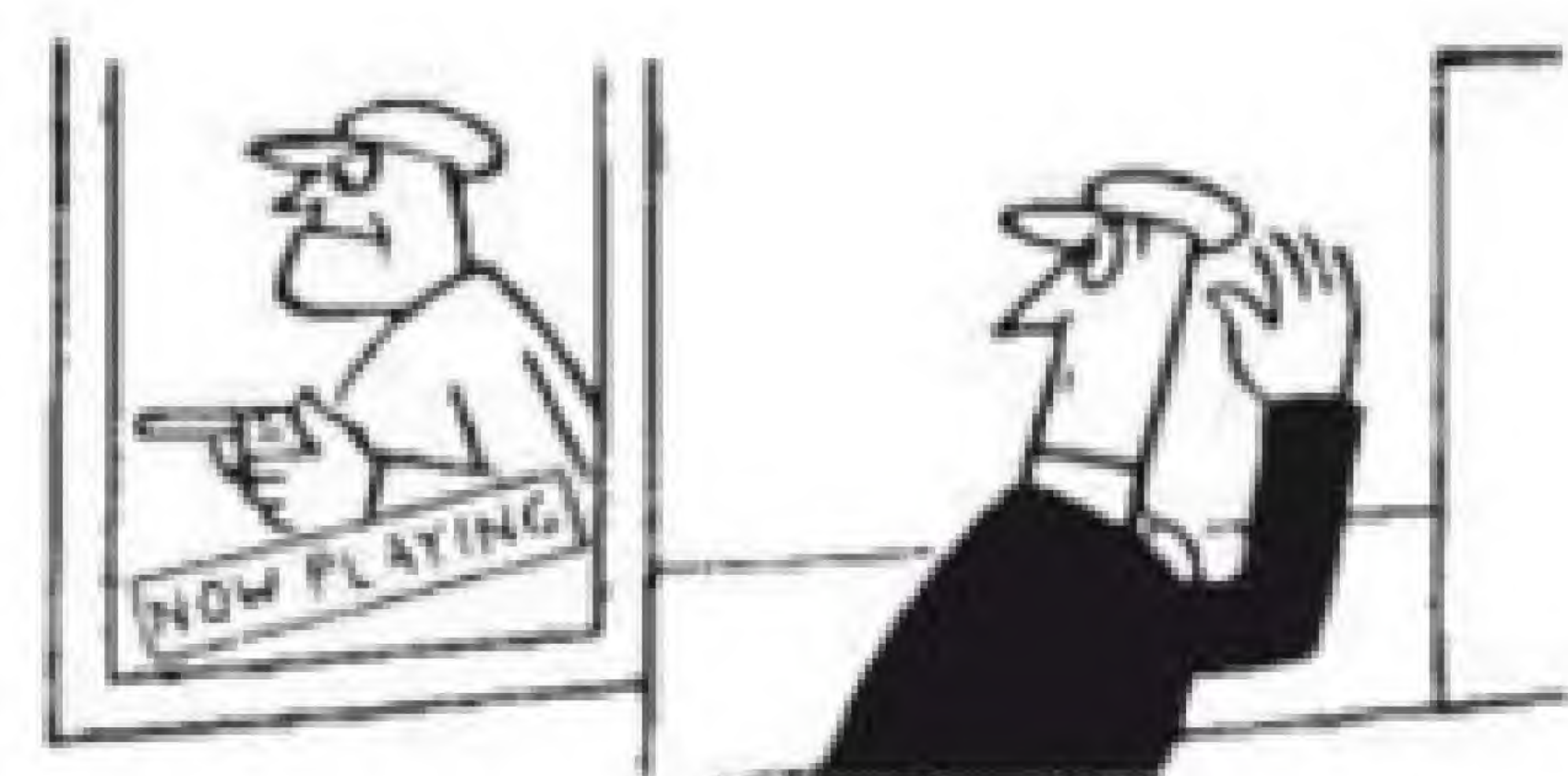
A moral crusader and a Commander-in-Chief grapple with different prerogatives. King was never tasked with national defense; Obama's election was contingent on a belief that he could keep Americans safe. Some observers nevertheless find it difficult to square elements of Obama's foreign policy—drone warfare and its civilian casualties—not only with King's concept of civilization but with the President's own criteria for just warfare. Cornel West railed against the decision to use King's Bible at Obama's second swearing-in. "The righteous indignation of a Martin Luther King," he said, "becomes a moment in political calculation." Still, the King who denounced the triple evils of militarism, racism, and materialism would likely hail next week's address, in which the President is expected to touch upon normalizing relations

with Cuba, immigration reform, and providing free education for students at community colleges—along with the Administration's efforts to prevent voter suppression, the cause that animated the Selma campaign, fifty years ago.

Beneath all this lies the irony that, nearly six years after the Cairo speech, Obama is less able to deploy the moral capital of civil rights, at least in the Middle East, not only because he is now established as the face of American authority but also because many of the battles that King fought have still not been resolved. Racism remains an Achilles' heel. The protests in Ferguson, New York, and beyond were watched by a global audience, and, as during the Cold War, America's domestic troubles become fodder for a morally compromised foreign power to deflect attention from its own failings. Iran's Ayatollah Khamenei took to Twitter to highlight the seeming contradiction that such actions were taking place under a black President. He tweeted, "Racial discrimination's still a dilemma in US. Still ppl are unsecure for having dark skins. The way police treat them confirms it." In spite of Obama's debt to the civil-rights movement, the ideal of American exceptionalism is only as valid as the standing of people who have just as often been seen as exceptions to America.

—Jelani Cobb

THE PICTURES AMYGDALA REPORT



Like the Italian Futurists he admires, the director Michael Mann exalts technology using neon, night, and velocity. "Heat," with its night shootout in darkness amid landing planes at LAX, and "Collateral," with its taxi-riding hit man blitzing through a bleached Los Angeles nightscape, were hypnotic studies in atmosphere. Likewise, in Mann's new film, "Blackhat," what you remember is less the story—a hacker named Hathaway gets sprung from prison to pursue a cyberterrorist across the globe—than the pulsing screens and gunning speedboats and nighttime vistas of a crippled nuclear reactor.

While visiting New York last week for "Blackhat"'s opening, Mann stopped at MOMA. A slight man of seventy-one with a gimlet gaze behind rimless glasses, he wore a black sweater, black pants, black shoes, and a raincoat that he insisted was dark blue. Parking himself in front of a red Ferrari racecar that hung upside down and shone like Snow

White's poisoned apple, he spoke of the "Hephaestus-like skill" behind a Ferrari's "massive strength and power." Mann is developing a film about Enzo Ferrari, the company's founder. "In the fifties," Mann said, "he would roast chickens in the barn where they kept the wooden bucks on which they beat the aluminum body panels, and listen on the radio to his team racing—in those days the death rate for racers was as much as fifty per cent a year." Mann used to drive in the Ferrari Challenge. When you race, he said, when you find the proper line through the curves, "your consciousness is projected in front of you, the present is suspended, and it's like the dreams you had of flying when you were ten."

He searched his iPhone to find a photo of a wheel of a Mars rover—a gorgeously intricate coil of meshwork, as much honeycomb as disk. "It's modern art and it belongs in here, too," he said. "I don't make much of a distinction between genius design and engineering and athletic performance and great works of art—it's all the human nervous system seen from the inside out. What allowed Ali"—whose boxing skills he re-created in "Ali"—"to do the so-called Ali Shuffle is no different from what inspired Vivaldi."

Upstairs, frowning over a Futurist bronze by Boccioni, Mann explained that the director's job is to manipulate that nervous system: "We're programmed to hide, to hunt, to lust—so much of us is limbic-system response, and the amygdala will register dislike of something far more quickly than the cerebral cortex can think about it." He manipulates by creating atmosphere, and he creates atmosphere by casting cities as characters, often antagonists. In his first feature, "Thief," he saw the hero, Frank, "as a rat in a maze," the maze being Chicago. "The maze is the



Michael Mann

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streets, and they should feel like tunnels—so you shoot at night, which puts a lid on things, and have the streets be wet, so the street lights reflect on the pavement.” He said that when he was developing the look of “Miami Vice,” the TV show, “All of South Beach was occupied by old folks from New York in wheelchairs, and the whole city was beige. So we painted everything, creating heat with vibrating pastels and turning the landscape into a twilight zone. I’m attracted to twilight zones.”

In the middle of “Blackhat,” Hathaway is bewildered by his quarry, so Mann decided to shoot those passages on Woo Sung Street, in Kowloon. “You already had all the frenzied street life, the massive compression of neon and light that’s so confusing—though we added the billboard with a big eye looking at you, like T. J. Eckleburg.” He followed that bit of sensory overload with an art-directed chase through the Tsuen Wan Drainage Tunnel: “The low ceilings and close walls and lack of right angles make us anxious”—the machine-gun fire helps, too—“and the baffles on the bottom of the helical ramp are like Brancusi!”

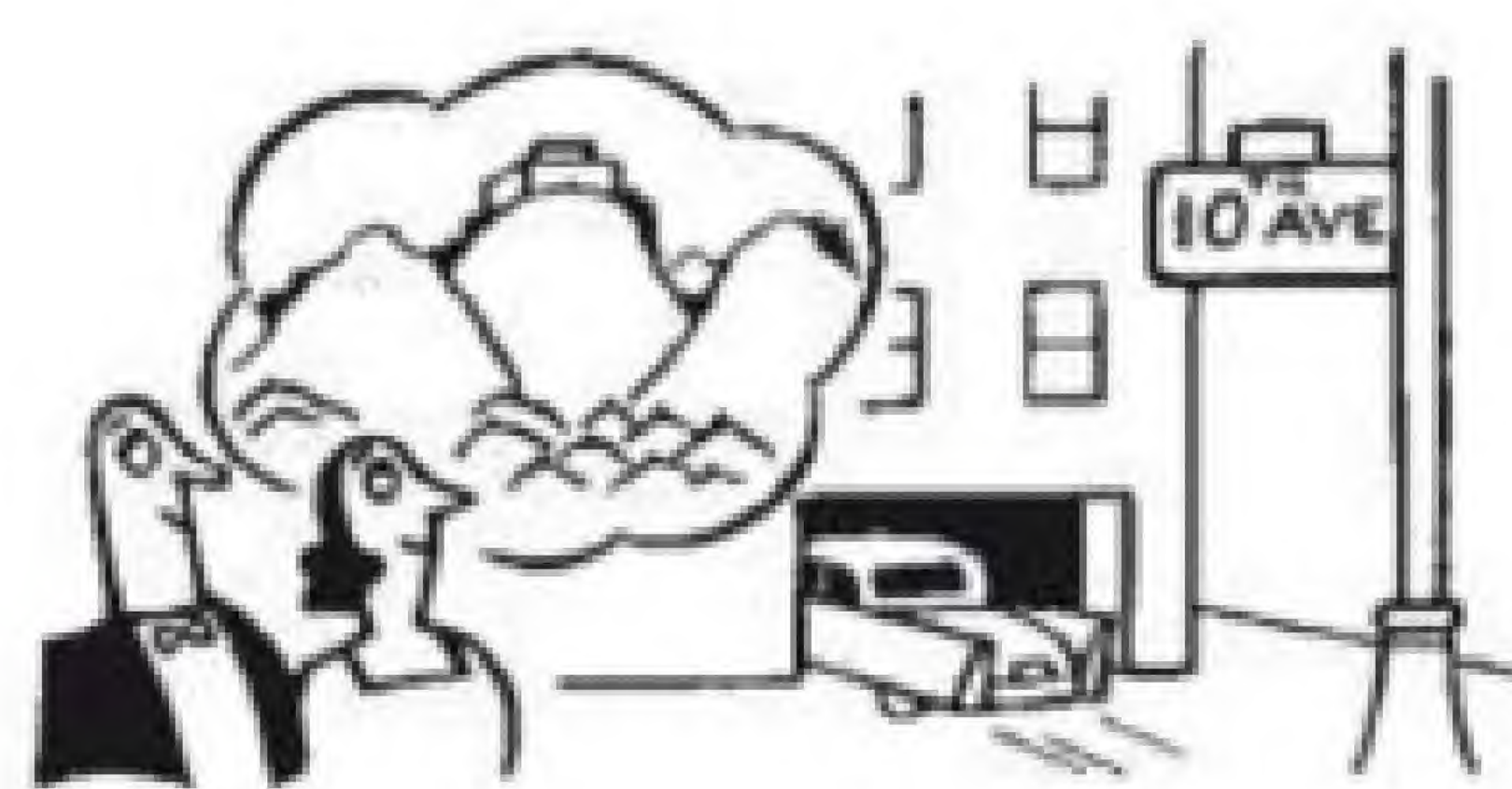
In Jakarta, at the end, Hathaway is a fugitive, hunted as much as hunter. “I wanted the most alien, you-are-on-another-planet feeling I could get,” Mann said. “I saw photos of a Balinese Nyepi Day parade, and had no idea how to decode these statues of demons, these *ogoh-ogohs*, being carried on palanquins.” So he set the film’s final showdown against the flow of the parade, using four thousand extras in the city’s Papua Square, at night, with

“the torchlight bringing out all these primitive blacks and reds that subjectify you into Hathaway’s experience.”

Sparing only a glance for the Picassos and van Goghs as he headed for the exit, Mann mentioned that at the top of Papua Square there was a bronze statue of a prisoner breaking his chains. “But it would have been gratuitously picaresque to put it in,” he said. He raised a warning finger against emblems that wouldn’t excite the amygdala, that might make you start to think. “Do not allow yourself to be seduced!”

—Tad Friend

VERMONT POSTCARD A GREAT ESCAPE



“This place doesn’t look very Austrian!” Ryan Miller, the leader of the band Guster, said, as he approached the front desk of the Trapp Family Lodge, in Stowe, Vermont, on the third day of 2015.

“I just imagined, like, exposed wood, a roaring fire, Chesterfields, and . . . taxidermy!” He peered around at the eighties corporate-campus-style architecture. The desk clerks’ pseudo-Tyrolean neckwear was the only visible Old World touch.

The clerks eyed Miller warily. The lodge, still run by the family that inspired “The Sound of Music” (the original building burned down in 1980), at-

tracts its share of oddballs, and this bearded, wild-eyed forty-two-year-old might be one.

“There’s a sheep’s head on the second floor,” one clerk suggested.

Miller is a relatively recent Vermont transplant. Since arriving from Brooklyn, in 2010, he has been aggressively pursuing “community” with what he calls like-minded “high-functioning weirdos” such as he left behind in the city. His quest has led to, among other things, a series on Vermont public television called “Makin’ Friends with Ryan Miller,” in which he travels around the state, trying to do just that. But even off camera he pursues a to-do list of real Vermont experiences, and he was hungry for one at the Trapp Family Lodge.

Miller didn’t want to leave New York, where he had lived happily since 1999, when the band relocated from Boston. “I’m an extrovert. In the sense that people give me energy,” he said, taking a seat in the bland lobby. “In New York, you walk out your door and anything can happen to you. I was meeting interesting people, I was eating food, I was staying out late. I was thriving. But my wife was the opposite. New York never clicked for her. The bug in the air was ‘We’re going to move to Vermont and raise our kids.’ And I would say, ‘No, that is not an option!’”

They moved when their second child was born.

“People told me it would take five years to develop a community,” Miller went on. “And I was, like, ‘Why does it have to take five years? In New York or L.A. it would take twenty minutes.’ In L.A., it’s, like, ‘Hey, what are you doing here? I’m directing a movie and we’re going to this crazy party—come along.’ And that becomes your community.”

But Miller started to find that when he visited his friends in the city they would say, “‘Wait. You can be here and have this conversation with me, but you get to go back to Vermont?’ And I was, like, ‘Wait. You’re right. That is kind of cool.’”

Now, entering his fifth year in the town of Williston, he says, “I get it, there is a community here—it’s just that people want their space and they want to be left alone to do their shit.”

Guster, the regionally beloved alt-rock band that Miller founded with two fellow Tufts University students during their



“I’m not pretending to be asleep—I’m pretending to be sexually satisfied.”

freshman-orientation week, in 1991, took a break when Miller moved north. “I got down on the band after the last album cycle,” he said. “We were in a box. We weren’t going to get a great review on Pitchfork. We weren’t going to get the cool blogs to put us on their list.” Also, Miller had discovered composing for movies. “And I thought, This is it! I’m going to score films! I could do this when I’m seventy!” He recently completed his fifth film score, for “Tig,” a documentary about the comedian Tig Notaro.

But he and his bandmates kept writing songs. “And in New York I would meet cool people who would say, ‘I like Guster,’ and I would think, Maybe I’ve just been a total dick about this, not appreciating that there is this legacy. I realized it was all fear-based.” Fear of what? “That we would be this purely nostalgic band if we came back. And then I thought, Put your head down and do your work.” “Evermotion,” Guster’s new album, came out last week.

Miller went back to the desk clerks, who had another idea: a snowshoe trek up to the old chapel that one of the von Trapp children built in 1950 in the woods above the lodge. That sounded good to Miller, for whom snowshoeing was another new experience. “I’m getting some of these!” he declared, stepping across a patch of ice. “You don’t slip!”

There was no taxidermy at the chapel, either, although there was exposed wood. But the cross behind the altar threw Miller.

“Wait. The family wasn’t Jewish?” he asked. “Then why were they running from the Nazis?”

Add “Watch ‘The Sound of Music’” to the to-do list.

—John Seabrook

THE MEDIUM IS THE MESSAGE MADE IN BUSHWICK



“Bring the goat a little higher on the screen. We want to see him really run away,” the director Gosia Lukomska instructed.

The puppetmaster Ronald Binion obliged. Onstage, the goat—a fuzzy blob

made from a thrift-store fur coat, cardboard, and masking tape—gave a loud bleat and trotted off, fleeing a coughing boy hand puppet, who was trying to pet him.

The puppet show was being filmed as a public-service announcement about Ebola, to air in Uganda. Recently, Jennifer Lawrence and Josh Hutcherson starred in a P.S.A. intended to educate Americans about the West African outbreak. Paul Falzone, who produced the puppet show, runs a Bushwick-based communications N.G.O. called Peripheral Vision International. For Ugandan audiences, he figured that a goat would make a friendly messenger. “Goats are almost a part of the general population in Uganda,” he said, between takes. They’re also not known to carry or pass on the deadly virus. “We thought about making a puppet with a Tyvek suit to dispel myths about Ebola health workers being infectious, but then we thought that might be a little too ‘E.T.’”

Ebola hasn’t appeared in Uganda since 2012, but people there are worried. Falzone’s P.S.A. will be shown in Ugandan video halls—community TV rooms that dot the countryside outside Kampala, the capital. The message: People should take precautions to avoid contracting the disease, but they shouldn’t become hysterical. Falzone, who has short hair and a stubbly beard, doesn’t believe in fearmongering. “We didn’t want to show anyone bleeding or anything similar to the signage governments have pasted everywhere, which have all the graphic details,” he said.

Back onstage, Lukomska was not satisfied with Binion’s bleat. The goat was supposed to sound worried that the boy was sick. “That’s a terrible bleat,” she said. “Horrible. We need to hear the fear in the goat—he’s this boy’s friend!”

“Give me a minute,” Binion said. He got up and stretched. Binion came to Falzone by way of the Jim Henson Company, where he has worked on Muppet films and TV shows, followed by roles on the Comedy Central series “Crank Yankers.” “Everyone thinks puppets are just for kids, but puppets give people a safer way to consider serious issues,” he said.

Peripheral Vision International gets funding from groups like the Ford Foundation; it has produced music videos and

other media for Ugandan audiences about such subjects as disability rights and condom use. Falzone, a former communications instructor at the University of Pennsylvania, started it in 2011. “I wanted to use communication to prevent someone from relying on a lifetime of humanitarian aid,” he said. He spends six months of the year in Uganda, but returns to a warehouse in Bushwick to shoot: “New York is still the best place for puppet talent.”

In Uganda, Falzone distributes DVDs that include a mix of his P.S.A.s, news clips, and other programming, such as “Newz Beat,” a show that he created after noticing the popularity of rap-music videos in Uganda. Last year, he shot a music video on the streets of Bushwick for the Ugandan rapper Eddy Kenzo, whose song “Stamina” was an anthem for President Yoweri Museveni’s 2011 reelection campaign. In exchange, Falzone persuaded Kenzo to star in some promos for his N.G.O. “Eddy gave us some serious street cred in Kampala,” Falzone said.

The Ebola P.S.A.s are a multistep project. In December, Falzone and Lukomska travelled to Uganda to record background noise and voice-overs, to give the spots authentic Ugandan accents and atmosphere. This week, Falzone is making another trip, to test the P.S.A.s with Ugandan audiences. He hopes to expand into West Africa and partner with U.N. agencies and other N.G.O.s. “They’re now realizing that people don’t like to be patronized with the same serious message over and over,” Lukomska said.

But first the puppeteers had to finish the show. After the goat ran away from the boy, and a neighbor expressed concern, the script called for the boy’s mother to take him to a local clinic. “Paul, now make the boy cough. Really cough. He’s got to be sick,” Lukomska instructed. Falzone and Binion—this time animating the neighbor and a nurse—acted out a doctor’s visit and an all-clear diagnosis. (Voices would be dubbed in later.) Then the goat returned with a smile on his face. “If people think too seriously about this stuff, their brains will melt,” Falzone said. “Look at Stewart, look at Colbert—they deliver the message without making people feel bad about their lives. We do that, too.”

—A. M. Brune

THE FINANCIAL PAGE

THE SHAKE SHACK ECONOMY

In 2004, when Danny Meyer opened a burger stand named Shake Shack in Madison Square Park, it didn't look like the foundation of a global empire. There was just one location, and Meyer was known for high-end venues like Gramercy Tavern. But the lines became legendary, and in 2008 other outlets started appearing—first in New York, then in the rest of the country, then as far afield as Moscow and Dubai. Today, Shake Shack brings in at least a hundred million dollars a year and is planning an I.P.O. that could value the company at a billion dollars. That seems like a lot of burgers, but Meyer's venture was perfectly timed to capitalize on a revolution in the fast-food business, the rise of restaurants known in the trade as "fast-casual"—places like Panera, Five Guys, and Chipotle.

Unlike traditional fast-food restaurants, fast-casuals emphasize fresh, natural, and often locally sourced ingredients. (Chipotle, for instance, tries to use only antibiotic-free meat.) Perhaps as a result, their food tends to taste better. It's also more expensive. The average McDonald's customer spends around five dollars a visit; the average Chipotle check is more than twice that. Fast-casual restaurants first emerged in serious numbers in the nineteen-nineties, and though the industry is just a fraction of the size of the traditional fast-food business, it has grown remarkably quickly. Today, according to the food-service consulting firm Technomic, it accounts for thirty-four billion dollars in sales. Since Chipotle went public, in 2006, its stock price has risen more than fifteen hundred per cent.

The rise of Chipotle and its peers isn't just a business story. It's a story about income distribution, changes in taste, and advances in technology. For most of the fast-food industry's history, taste was a secondary consideration. Food was prepared according to a factory model, explicitly designed to maximize volume and reduce costs. Chains relied on frozen food and assembly-line production methods, and their ingredients came from industrial suppliers. They were able to serve enormous amounts of food quickly and cheaply, even if it wasn't that healthy or tasty, and they enjoyed enormous success in the last quarter of the twentieth century. The number of outlets septupled between 1970 and 2000.

But, even as the big chains thrived, other trends were emerging. Most of the gains from the economic boom of the eighties and nineties went to people at the top of the income distribution. That created a critical mass of affluent consum-

ers. These people led increasingly busy work lives. They typically lived alone or in dual-income households, so they cooked less and ate out a lot. Michael Silverstein, a senior partner at the Boston Consulting Group and the co-author of the book "Trading Up," has made a study of this kind of consumer. "These aren't people with unlimited resources, but they have plenty of disposable income," he told me. "One of the things they're willing to spend money on is food away from home." In the same period, affluent consumers developed a serious interest in food and became more discriminating in their tastes—a development often called "the American food revolution." Wine consumption jumped fifty per cent between 1991 and 2005. After the U.S.D.A. started certifying food as organic, in 1990, sales of organic food rose steadily, and stores like Whole Foods expanded across the country.

Traditional fast-food chains pretty much ignored these changes. They were still doing great business, and their industrial model made it hard to appeal to anyone who was concerned about natural ingredients and freshness. That created an opening for fast-casual restaurants. You had tens of millions of affluent consumers. They ate out a lot. They were comfortable with fast food, having grown up during its heyday, but they wanted something other than the typical factory-made burger. So, even as the fast-food giants focussed on keeping prices down, places like Panera and Chipotle began charging higher prices. Their customers never flinched.

It might seem that the success of fast-casual was simply a matter of producing the right product at the right time. But restaurants like Chipotle and Five Guys didn't just respond to customer demand; they also shaped it. As

Darren Tristano, an analyst at Technomic, put it, "Consumers didn't really know what they wanted until they could get it." The archetype of this model is Starbucks. In 1990, the idea of spending two dollars for a cup of coffee seemed absurd to most Americans. But Starbucks changed people's idea of what coffee tasted like and how much enjoyment could be got from it. The number of gourmet-coffee drinkers nearly quintupled between 1993 and 1999, and many of them have now abandoned Starbucks for even fancier options.

As Starbucks did for coffee, Chipotle and Shake Shack have changed people's expectations of what fast food can be. The challenge for the old chains is that new expectations spread. Millennials, for instance, have become devoted fast-casual customers. So McDonald's is now experimenting with greater customization, and has said that it would like to rely entirely on "sustainable beef." The question is whether you can inject an emphasis on taste and freshness into a business built around cheapness and convenience. After decades in which fast-food chains perfected the "fast," can they now improve the "food"?

—James Surowiecki



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THE NEXT THING

Michel Houellebecq's Francophobic satire.

BY ADAM GOPNIK



The French writer Michel Houellebecq has become a literary “case” to be reprimanded as much as an author to be read, and his new novel, “Soumission,” or “Submission,” shows why. The book, which will be published in English by Farrar, Straus & Giroux, is shaped by a simple idea. In France in the very near future, the respectable republican parties fragment the vote in a multiparty election, and the two top vote-getters are Marine Le Pen, of the extreme right, and one Mohammed Ben Abbes, the fictive leader of a French Muslim Brotherhood. In the runoff, the French left backs the Muslim, preferring the devil it doesn’t know to the one it does. Ben Abbes’s government soon

imposes a kind of relaxed Sharia law throughout France and—this is the book’s central joke and point—the French elite are cravenly eager to collaborate with the new regime, delighted not only to convert but to submit to a bracing and self-assured authoritarianism. Like the oversophisticated Hellenists in Cavafy’s poem, they have been secretly waiting for the barbarians all their lives.

Houellebecq is one of those writers who cause critics to panic, since placing him is tricky. He is probably the most famous French novelist of his generation. An immediately recognizable caricature of Houellebecq as a wannabe Nostradamus was the image on the last issue of

Charlie Hebdo before the attack on its staff. But he is not a particularly graceful stylist, and it exasperates French writers who are to see him made so much of outside France, not to mention within it. Though he began as a poet, he doesn’t have much poetic grip, nor are his choices and phrases of a kind that make other writers envious. (One well-known French critic has pointed out, tartly, that no good writer would ever confuse, as Houellebecq does in the new novel, the French word for “vineyard” with the French word for “vintage.”) Yet it is a mistake to think of him as a provocateur, in the manner of authors who purposefully set out to goad and annoy as many people as they can with each new book, like Gore Vidal, or, for that matter, Céline.

Houellebecq is, simply, a satirist. He likes to take what’s happening now and imagine what would happen if it kept on happening. That’s what satirists do. Jonathan Swift saw that the English were treating the Irish as animals; what if they took the next natural step and ate their babies? Orwell, with less humor, imagined what would happen if life in Britain remained, for forty years, at the depressed level of the BBC cafeteria as it was in 1948, and added some Stalinist accessories. Huxley, in “Brave New World,” took the logic of a hedonistic and scientific society to its farthest outcome, a place where pleasure would be all and passion unknown. This kind of satire impresses us most when the imaginative extrapolation intersects an unexpected example—when it suddenly comes close enough to fit. (As when Arnold Schwarzenegger appeared as living proof of Philip K. Dick’s prescience about the merger of American politics and the wilder shores of its entertainments, achieved by people with funny names.)

In the novel that made Houellebecq famous, “Les Particules Élémentaires” (1998), he proposed that a society with an unchecked devotion to economic liberalism and erotic libertinism would come to a daylong oscillation between fucking and finance, where bankers would literally break their backs in the act of having sex for the hundredth time that day. The satire seemed ridiculously heavy-handed and overwrought—and then came Dominique Strauss-Kahn, the head of the International Monetary Fund, who, in the brief time before dining with his

“Submission” has been called anti-Islam, but France is the real object of its scorn.

daughter and boarding a plane, turned out to have budgeted fifteen minutes for sex (coerced or not) with a total stranger. D.S.K. was a character only Houellebecq could have imagined, and already had.

Houellebecq is not merely a satirist but—more unusually—a *sincere* satirist, genuinely saddened by the absurdities of history and the madneses of mankind. He doesn't "delight in depicting our follies," as reviewers like to say; he's made miserable by them. French reviews and American previews of "Submission" might leave one with the impression of a sardonic, teeth-baring polemic about the evils of Islam, the absurdities of feminism, the terrible demoralization of French life. In truth, the tone of the book is melancholic rather than polemical. Life makes Houellebecq blue. "The totality of animals, the crushing majority of men, live without ever finding the least need for justification," his narrator, a literature professor at the Sorbonne, reflects. "They live because they live, and that's all, and that's how they reason—and then I suppose they die because they die, and this, in their eyes, ends the analysis." That's Houellebecq's typical tone; the book's virtues lie in his mordant, disabused eye for depressing details of French life.

Even if, sentence by sentence, Houellebecq is not a writer to envy, certainly he does have a voice of his own, one of slightly resigned sociological detachment. In the very first pages of the new book, he remarks, apropos the uses of a university degree in literature, that "a young woman applying for a job as a saleswoman at Céline or Hermès will, in the first place, have to take care of her appearance, but a literature degree could constitute a secondary attribute pleasing to the employer, suggesting a certain intellectual agility that might indicate a potential evolution of her career—literature, in place of useful skills, still has a positive connotation in the domain of the luxury industry." You master Proust to become a better salesgirl, and what else would you expect? The commodification of the world and the art and the people in it leaves Houellebecq unexcited.

This flattened tone seems, at first, like an affectation. But, reading "Public Enemies," a collection of confessional letters exchanged by Houellebecq and the philosopher Bernard-Henri Lévy, one realizes that it's not an affectation at all. It's

an affect. It tells a truth about Houellebecq's own disconcerted sense of detachment from human relations. He is, after all, a man whose mother wrote a bitter memoir about him, insisting that her son should say, "I am a liar, I am an impostor, I was a parasite, all I've done in my life is harm the people around me. And I ask forgiveness"—and it seems fair to say that, when your *mom* writes the bitter memoir, something really has gone screwy in your emotional life. His heroes always seem truly puzzled by the emotional rewards that other men claim to get from children and work and family and even sex.

Anhedonic in the extreme, Houellebecq finds the conventional pleasure-seeking surface of French life entirely absurd, which is one reason he satirizes it so effectively. He can be very funny about the details of modern sex—his protagonists find the objective, clinical details underwhelming—and is fearless in admitting to his own inspection of them, as in this description from a moment of Internet porn: "The penis passed from one mouth to the other, the tongues crossing like flights of swallows, lightly troubled, in the somber sky . . . when they are ready to leave Europe for their winter pilgrimage." The parodic note, neither contemptuous nor indignant but preternaturally calm, is distinctively Houellebecq's.

The other striking thing about Houellebecq is how literary he is—the first hundred or so pages of "Submission" depend on a complicated analysis of the work of the nineteenth-century writer J. K. Huysmans, best known as a novelist of Decadence and the Church, and for his influence on other French writers. This is, at least, an inadvertent compliment to the continued literary culture of France: no American satiric novelist, not Tom Wolfe or Christopher Buckley, could hope to hold a mass audience with hundreds of pages on the follies typically encountered in the university study of Hart Crane, or on how best to conceptualize his relationship with Wallace Stevens.

The literary obsessions are important, since it turns out that the principal target of the satire is not French Islam—which is really a bystander that gets, at most, winged—but the spinelessness of the French intellectual class, including the Huysmans-loving narrator. The jokes are all about how quickly the professors

find excuses to do what's asked of them by the Islamic regime, and how often they refer to the literature they study to give them license to do it. The new Islamic administration at the University of Paris allows a professor of Rimbaud studies to carry on, but on the condition that he teach Rimbaud's conjectured conversion to Islam as an established fact. The professor is happy to do it. Huysmans's actual conversion to Catholicism makes the narrator contemplate the convenient possibility of crossing over: for all his supposed decadence, Huysmans might have welcomed the new religious regime.

The charge that Houellebecq is Islamophobic seems misplaced. He's not Islamophobic. He's Francophobic. The portrait of the Islamic regime is quite fond; he likes the fundamentalists' suavity and sureness. Ben Abbes's reform of the educational system is wholesome, and his ambitions to rebuild France are almost a form of neo-Gaullism. (He succeeds in integrating Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Turkey into the European Union, creating a power bloc greater than the American one.) The reform of education, the reinforcement of the family, even the re-domestication of women are all held up for admiration. It's the shrugging admiration of satire, of course, but neither Ben Abbes nor his government seems meant to be seen as contemptible, the way the French who assist them certainly are. One of the few objects of real scorn in the book is François Bayrou, the (actual) French centrist politician whose dancing between left and right in electoral politics is legend, and who becomes Ben Abbes's chief apologist and mouthpiece.

All the most eloquent spokesmen in the book are religious-minded and in favor of theocracy. Another collaborationist professor at the Sorbonne—which is soon funded solely by a Saudi prince, with all women veiled—eventually offers to let the narrator achieve his dream of editing the Pléiade edition of Huysmans, in exchange for converting to Islam. The struggle of the twentieth century was between two failed humanisms, the other professor explains—between the "hard" humanism of Communism and the "soft" humanism of liberal capitalism, each in its way "horribly reductive." Both have failed, and some form of faith must take their place. Without faith, any idea of a French or a European revival is impossible. Why not Islam,

whose deity is properly remote—and thus right for a cosmos that science has shown us to be immense—rather than provincially incarnate and local, like the Christian Messiah? The narrator converts.

Like most satirists worth reading, Houellebecq is a conservative. “I show the disasters produced by the liberalization of values,” he has said. Satire depends on comparing the crazy place we’re going to with the implicitly sane place we left behind. That’s why satirists are often nostalgists, like Tom Wolfe, who longs for the wild and crazy American past, or Evelyn Waugh, with his ascendant American vulgarians and his idealized lost Catholic aristocracy. Houellebecq despises contemporary consumer society, and though he is not an enthusiast, merely a fatalist, about its possible Islamic replacement, he thinks that this is the apocalypse we’ve been asking for. What he truly hates is Enlightenment ideas and practices, and here his satire intersects with a fast-moving current of French reactionary thought, exemplified by “The Suicide of France,” a surprise best-seller by the television journalist Éric Zemmour.

Zemmour’s is one of those polemical books, like Alan Bloom’s “The Closing of the American Mind,” which carry everything before them, because they

run right over every obstacle. For honest, thorough scrutiny of the opposition’s authors and actions, Zemmour makes Bloom look like John Stuart Mill: his argument depends on his never dealing with a specific instance. Everything flows by in a torrent of hysterical rhetoric. He hates feminism, but there is no extended treatment of feminist authors, or any attempt to discriminate between French feminism and the American kind; shrieking harpies dethroned the father, and now everything sucks. He hates ecologists, but there is no argument about why the world would be cleaner or pleasanter had environmentalism not happened. American universities, he says, have become playpens for empty legacies of the rich; there is no recognition that the historical trend has run in the opposite direction.

In a weird but representative diatribe, he pines for the day when European football teams and players were happily rooted in their places. Never mind that pre-“liberal” soccer was notable for the almost unbelievable level of violence that the players, and their supporters, endured. (Before liberalism ruined football, thirty-eight fans were crushed to death at a Eurocup final.) The result of the new free market in football is that French footballers, like Thierry Henry and Ar-

sène Wenger, have become heroes in North and West London, their exploits heralded, their pictures hung in giant murals high on the stadium façade. This leaves a lot of English footballers unemployed, I suppose, but in what way can having its actors idolized abroad be a loss for French prestige?

And when was the better time from which France has fallen? Hardly the forties! Not the thirties, which led to them. It can’t be the twenties, when France was barely recovering from the disaster of the teens, with a million and a half dead, and not the aughts, when the Dreyfus case tore the country apart on savagely “communitarian” grounds. In the back of Zemmour’s mind, it seems, is an oddly singular and specific place to long for—the Gaullist France of the booming sixties, when Zemmour was a kid. Society held together, authority was firm and essentially benevolent, each man had a role, each woman could choose to stay home if she wanted, and Catherine Deneuve was in every other movie. This is a nostalgia that Houellebecq, who was also a kid then, shares. For him, too, this was the happier time: *Pif Gadget*, a charming French children’s magazine quietly run by the Communist Party, is one of the few things recalled with tender regard in Houellebecq’s work.

Zemmour’s politics, though he is often accused of being a fellow-traveller with the National Front, are really those of an unreconstructed Gaullist, purer than the political kind of Gaullist still in existence, because the political kind had to become impure to survive. Houellebecq is innocent of the uglier schemes that this nostalgia produces and that are part of Zemmour’s program—the urge to return to that era by expelling Muslims from France or keeping them highly straitened within it.

But the two writers do converge, inasmuch as their real sympathies lie outside contemporary political choices, in a revival of the old ideology of the far right, back before it disgraced itself—the ideology of conservative anti-capitalism in the form it took a century ago, more or less benignly in Chesterton and Belloc, and decidedly less benignly in the likes of Charles Maurras, the theorist of the monarchical (and ultimately pro-Vichy) Action Française movement. The tenets of the faith are simple: liberalism,

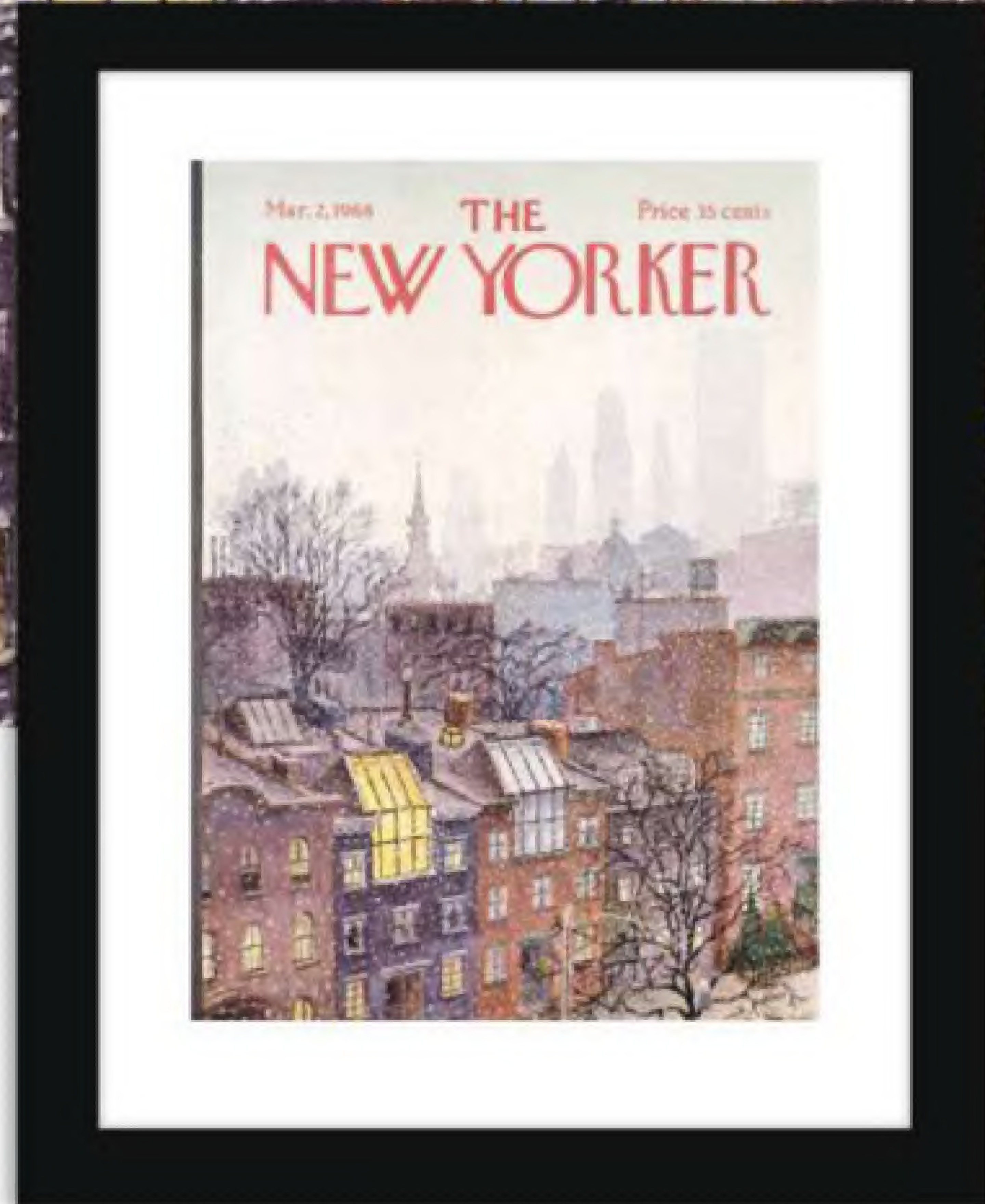
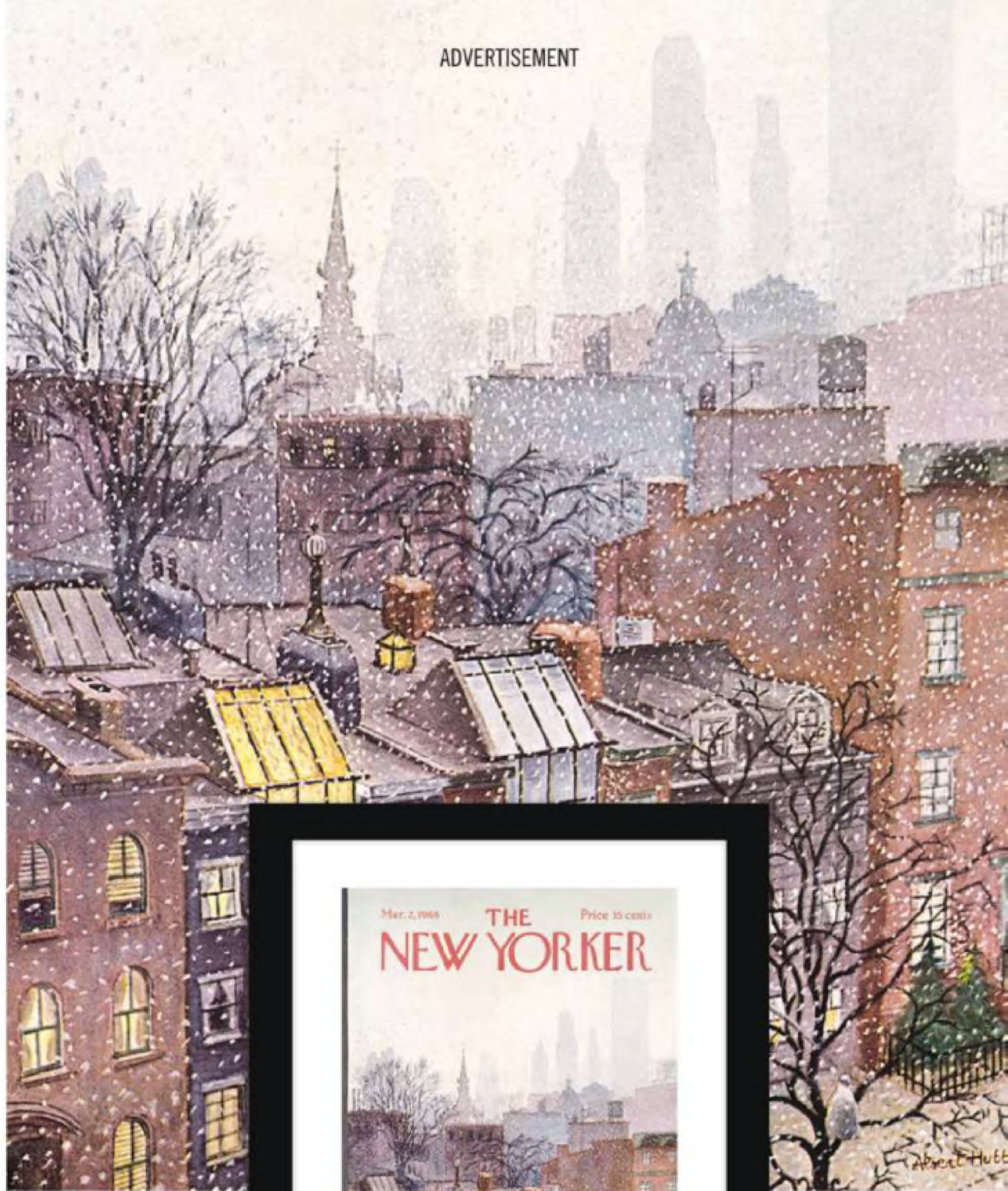


“Can you juggle a household, three kids, and a career?”

cosmopolitanism, and international finance are the source of all evil. Liberal capitalism is a conspiracy against folk authenticity on behalf of the “internationalists,” the rootless cosmopolitans. The nation is everything, and internationalism is its nemesis. The bankers cosset us with narcotics of their civilization even as they strip us of our culture.

Chesterton and Belloc and their ideas appear in “Submission” as a kind of secondary sound, a Greek chorus. Houellebecq takes very seriously the enterprise, in which Huysmans is also implicated, of rejecting Enlightenment modernity in favor of some kind of mystical-spiritual nation reestablished on a foundation of faith. There is a passage in “Submission”—by Houellebecq’s own account the key scene in the book—in which the narrator goes south to contemplate the Black Madonna of Rocamadour and has a moment of blissful vision, one that he wishes to sustain but can’t. Islam rushes in to fill the absence. Houellebecq makes the entente of Islam and Catholicism attractive. “My book describes the destruction of the philosophy handed down by the Enlightenment, which no longer makes sense to anyone, or to very few people,” he said in an interview. “Catholicism, by contrast, is doing rather well. I would maintain that an alliance between Catholics and Muslims is possible.”

While anti-Semitism has always been the active, evil form of extreme traditionalist ideology—get them out of here and we’ll be pure—Houellebecq’s half-infatuated fascination with Islam has always been the more fatalist form. If Judaism represents the corrupting, cosmopolitan alternative to the European nation, an Islamic invasion represents its apocalyptic end, the conqueror at the gate. The idea of an overnight Muslim takeover, where suddenly the University of Paris becomes the Islamic University of Paris, perches at the back of the European apocalyptic imagination, perhaps because it once really happened. On the morning of May 28, 1453, Constantinople was still a Christian city. The next day, it wasn’t. The great churches were turned into great mosques, and the Sultan’s flag flew over the conquered city. (The conquest never would have taken place had the Byzantines not first been fatally weakened by the fraternal Christian sack of the Fourth Crusade.) The notion that you wake up



ALBERT HUBBEL, MARCH 2, 1968

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and there's the Eiffel Tower with a crescent moon and star upon it haunts the Western imagination of catastrophe.

The spectre of an Islamic re-conquest is therefore mixed with admiration for its discipline and purpose. The Muslim warriors are taken to be antimaterialists inspired by an austere ideal—the very idea of submission to authority that we have lost. In the back-and-forth of fantasies of conquest and submission between panicked Catholics and renascent Muslims, Islam plays an ambiguous role, as both the feared besieger and the admirable Other. Charles Maurras feared Islam, and prophesied, in the twenties, that a mosque built in Paris would be an opening for the infidel. His brand of religious nationalism helped inspire the Turkish poet Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, who studied in Paris, to shape his dreams of a reborn authoritarian Islamic-nationalist state at home—a mirror image of Maurras's idealized France, and both, naturally, hostile to Jews. For where the Jews in the European reactionary imagination are insidious termites, eating silently away at the foundations, the Muslims are outsized conquerors, arriving to take over when you're weakened. Chesterton, suspicious of Jews, was terrified of Muslims: "A void is made in the heart of Islam which has to be filled up again and again by a mere repetition of the revolution that founded it. There are no sacraments; the only thing that can happen is a sort of apocalypse, as unique as the end of the world; so the apocalypse can only be repeated and the world end again and again." The Jews are the poison of modernity, but Islam is the zombie state at its end.

In "Submission," the Islamic authority, with the author's felt approval, turns toward Chestertonian distributism, with large enterprises denied subsidy and small artisanal ones encouraged. But all these wise things come too late for the indigent French, arriving at the hands of a conqueror rather than at the pleasure of the nation. We left it too long to be salvaged; now we can be only slaves.

All this belongs, of course, to the world of fervid fantasy and café millennialism. The real reasons for the French obsession with decline are no doubt simpler. French was once far ahead of English as a world language; now it's not.

(That's one reason Houellebecq is resented at home; he's one of the few writers who get translated. Even the Nobel Prize winner Patrick Modiano had a very patchy English résumé.) Meanwhile, the successive political failures of French governments have demoralized all political sides. The mood in Britain in the seventies was not very different. Then came Thatcherism, which, however its long-term record is scored, was certainly perceived as successful by its adherents, and gave a sense of efficacy to politics, one inherited by New Labour in its early euphoric days. (A small cultural sign: the benevolently imagined New Labour Prime Minister that Hugh Grant plays in "Love Actually" is unimaginable in a French film. No politician would be allowed that much heart, or good intentions.) The French Presidents Chirac and Sarkozy and Hollande have all been seen as failures, and their failure infects the social tone of the nation's popular literature. For all this apocalyptic nihilism, there may be nothing here that five years of economic growth and a popular Presidency won't cure.

Imagining that what's happening now will keep on happening is what satirists do. It is also what simpletons do. Every huckster on television tries to sell gold by pointing to an ascending price line and insisting that it can go only ever upward. In the real world, a vector never keeps going in a straight line. It meets a countervailing force or splits in two. We never got to 1984, or to boiling Irish babies. Other forces intervened.

In France, countervailing forces seem sure to intervene, too. Enlightenment values are hardly as empty as Houellebecq pretends; there is surely more fight left in the light than people want to admit. The vast rally in Paris on January 11th may help revive the Fifth Republic. But, in any case, the great majority of Muslim kids will do what kids everywhere do: pursue their own interests by taking advantage of the system, which, for all its failings, is still meritocratic at heart. Sharia law is the last thing they want; it costs too much. What liberal values have going for them is liberty and value. In the recent horror, the two Muslim victims of the two Islamic terrorists were a cop and a copy editor, and this immersion in upwardly mobile ordinariness is likely to be more

typical of the Muslim future than the apocalyptic fantasy of a fundamentalist triumph.

Certainly, when French Muslims write about French Muslim experience, you get nothing like the calm triumphalism of Houellebecq's imagination. Instead, there's the usual human mixture of self-indictment, self-criticism, extreme resentment, and hope. In Kamel Daoud's recent "Meursault, Counter-Investigation" (due out later this year, from Other Press), a tour-de-force reimagining of Camus's "The Stranger," from the point of view of the mute Arab victims, the author seeks not to re-indict the colonizing French but to relate all the disappointments that the dream of free Algeria has produced for the "natives," particularly their degradation by political Islam. Sabri Louatah's immense, and immensely popular, multivolume novel, titled, with deliberate irony, "Les Sauvages," tells of the rise toward the French Presidency of a Muslim politician named Idder Chaouch—a rather more credibly fleshed-out figure than Houellebecq's shadowy Ben Abbes—and shows a Franco-Algerian family in the provincial city of Saint-Étienne split several ways in pursuit of power, glamour, spiritual authority, and so on. Inspired less by Houellebecq's high-literary French tradition than by American showrunners like David Chase, David Simon, and Vince Gilligan—Louatah claims to have seen the entire run of "The Sopranos" right through, three times—the work makes the point that French Arabs are just as divided, from violent fundamentalists to secular republicans, and just as open to the world's influences, as everybody else. Common sense, and the book's popularity, suggests that this view is largely credible. Louatah certainly shows that you can plausibly imagine a Muslim President of France in a non-hysterical, not to mention anti-apocalyptic, manner.

This is not to say that Islam in France won't continue to be problematic or that the extreme right won't continue its rise or that the respectable republicans won't be as fatuously self-destructive as Houellebecq imagines them to be. The next thing is just never likely to be the *same* thing. The fun of satire is to think what would happen if nothing happens to stop what is happening. But that's not what happens. ♦

TO FALL OUT OF LOVE, DO THIS

BY SUSANNA WOLFF

In Mandy Len Catron's *Modern Love* essay, "To Fall in Love With Anyone, Do This," she refers to a study by the psychologist Arthur Aron (and others) that explores whether intimacy between two strangers can be accelerated by having them ask each other a specific series of personal questions. The 36 questions in the study are broken up into three sets, with each set intended to be more probing than the previous one.

—*The Times*.

6. Honestly, which one of us would you rather have die first?

7. So you want me to be the one who becomes a burden to our children and then dies alone?

8. Name three things you find irritating about your partner.

9. Why do we even have a dishwasher if you insist on thoroughly



The following questions are part of a follow-up study to see whether the intimacy between two committed partners can be broken down by forcing them to ask each other thirty-six questions no one in a relationship should actually ask.

SET I

1. Given the choice of anyone in the world, whom would you like to punch in the face?

2. On average, how long do you spend composing tweets before you post them? Do you realize that they don't matter?

3. Before responding to a text, do you wait a few minutes to make it seem like you're doing something more important? Why? Answer me now.

4. What would constitute a "perfect" day for you? Why do we always just go home and watch Netflix instead of doing any of that stuff?

5. What's your favorite song? No, it's not. I've never once heard you listen to that song.

scrubbing the dishes before putting them in? O.K., fine, I'm adding your dishwasher issue to my list of irritating things, too. So there.

10. If you could change anything about your partner's family, what would it be?

11. Take four minutes and tell your partner your life story in as much detail as possible. I already know that story. And I was there for that one. It didn't happen like that.

12. Why did you send me a link to this *Times* article if you didn't want us to go through the questions together?

SET II

13. Between you and your partner, who is the better gift-giver?

14. No, I did like that jacket, but I specifically asked for it, so it doesn't really count as a gift that you thought of, and, you know, "it's the thought that counts."

15. Ha ha. Fine. You can be the better gift-giver. Happy? Next question.

16. What is your most treasured

memory? I was there for that one. It *definitely* didn't happen like that.

17. What is your most horrible memory? No, "Right now, answering these questions" doesn't count.

18. Is there something that you've dreamed of doing for a long time but haven't done because you know your partner wouldn't like it?

19. Don't pin that on me. You know we don't have to do everything together, right?

20. What do you want to do for dinner?

21. If you knew we were getting dinner tonight, why would you eat a cupcake at five? All I've had to eat today is a cup of soup and, like, eight almonds.

22. Take turns going to the bathroom with nothing but a thin, not at all soundproof door separating you from your partner. Just sit there and hear it all.

23. What do you want to watch tonight?

24. Are you going to fall asleep in the middle of the episode again?

SET III

25. I'm not the one making us answer these questions. Do you want to stop?

26. Do you not think our relationship is strong enough to handle these questions?

27. How do you feel about your partner's relationship with his or her mother?

28. Oh, like your mother is so much better?

29. Share a tube of toothpaste with your partner.

30. Why are you not squeezing from the bottom? Are you a monster?

31. Tell your partner which celebrities you find attractive.

32. Why do none of those celebrities look anything like me?

33. Rent a car with your partner and drive while he or she gives directions.

34. How am I supposed to get across four lanes in two seconds? You have to tell me the exit earlier.

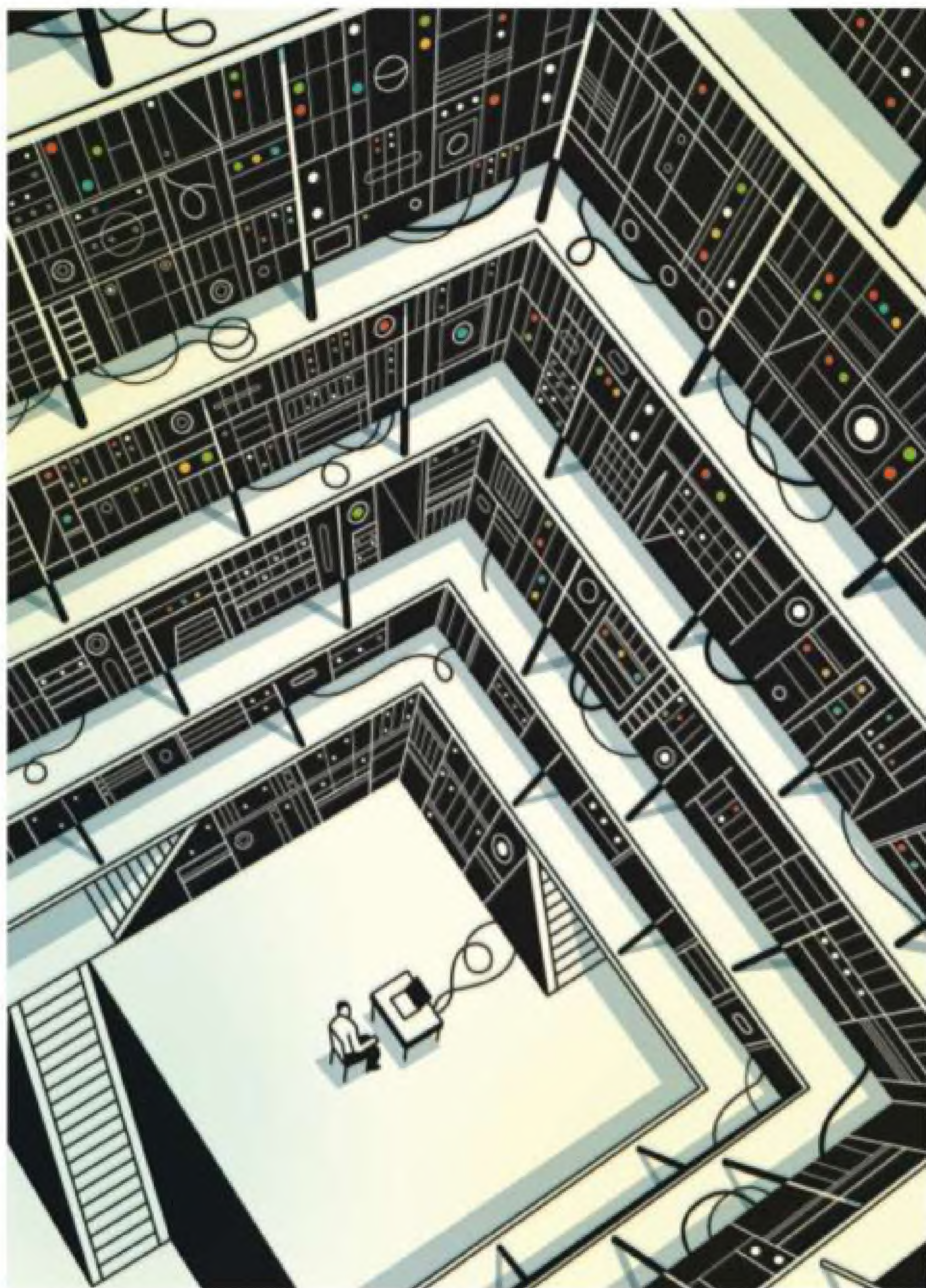
35. Tell your partner something that you like about him or her. Try to think of something. Anything.

36. Given the choice of anyone in the world, whom would you like to punch in the face? ♦

THE COBWEB

Can the Internet be archived?

BY JILL LEPORE



Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 took off from Amsterdam at 10:31 A.M. G.M.T. on July 17, 2014, for a twelve-hour flight to Kuala Lumpur. Not much more than three hours later, the plane, a Boeing 777, crashed in a field outside Donetsk, Ukraine. All two hundred and ninety-eight people on board were killed. The plane's last radio contact was at 1:20 P.M. G.M.T. At 2:50 P.M. G.M.T., Igor Girkin, a Ukrainian separatist leader also known as Strelkov, or someone acting on his behalf, posted a message on VKontakte, a Russian social-media site: "We just downed a plane, an AN-26." (An Antonov 26 is a Soviet-built military cargo plane.) The post includes links to video of the wreckage of

a plane; it appears to be a Boeing 777.

Two weeks before the crash, Anatol Shmelev, the curator of the Russia and Eurasia collection at the Hoover Institution, at Stanford, had submitted to the Internet Archive, a nonprofit library in California, a list of Ukrainian and Russian Web sites and blogs that ought to be recorded as part of the archive's Ukraine Conflict collection. Shmelev is one of about a thousand librarians and archivists around the world who identify possible acquisitions for the Internet Archive's subject collections, which are stored in its Wayback Machine, in San Francisco. Strelkov's VKontakte page was on Shmelev's list. "Strelkov is the field commander in Slaviansk and one

of the most important figures in the conflict," Shmelev had written in an e-mail to the Internet Archive on July 1st, and his page "deserves to be recorded twice a day."

On July 17th, at 3:22 P.M. G.M.T., the Wayback Machine saved a screenshot of Strelkov's VKontakte post about downing a plane. Two hours and twenty-two minutes later, Arthur Bright, the Europe editor of the *Christian Science Monitor*, tweeted a picture of the screenshot, along with the message "Grab of Donetsk militant Strelkov's claim of downing what appears to have been MH17." By then, Strelkov's VKontakte page had already been edited: the claim about shooting down a plane was deleted. The only real evidence of the original claim lies in the Wayback Machine.

The average life of a Web page is about a hundred days. Strelkov's "We just downed a plane" post lasted barely two hours. It might seem, and it often feels, as though stuff on the Web lasts forever, for better and frequently for worse: the embarrassing photograph, the regretted blog (more usually regrettable not in the way the slaughter of civilians is regrettable but in the way that bad hair is regrettable). No one believes any longer, if anyone ever did, that "if it's on the Web it must be true," but a lot of people do believe that if it's on the Web it will stay on the Web. Chances are, though, that it actually won't. In 2006, David Cameron gave a speech in which he said that Google was democratizing the world, because "making more information available to more people" was providing "the power for anyone to hold to account those who in the past might have had a monopoly of power." Seven years later, Britain's Conservative Party scrubbed from its Web site ten years' worth of Tory speeches, including that one. Last year, BuzzFeed deleted more than four thousand of its staff writers' early posts, apparently because, as time passed, they looked stupider and stupider. Social media, public records, junk: in the end, everything goes.

Web pages don't have to be deliberately deleted to disappear. Sites hosted by corporations tend to die with their hosts. When MySpace, GeoCities, and Friendster were reconfigured or sold, millions of accounts vanished. (Some of those companies may have notified users, but Jason Scott, who started an outfit

The Web wasn't built to preserve its past; the Wayback Machine aims to remedy that.

“Superb . . . not to be missed”
—Wall Street Journal

Madame Cézanne

metmuseum.org

ONE MET.
MANY WORLDS.



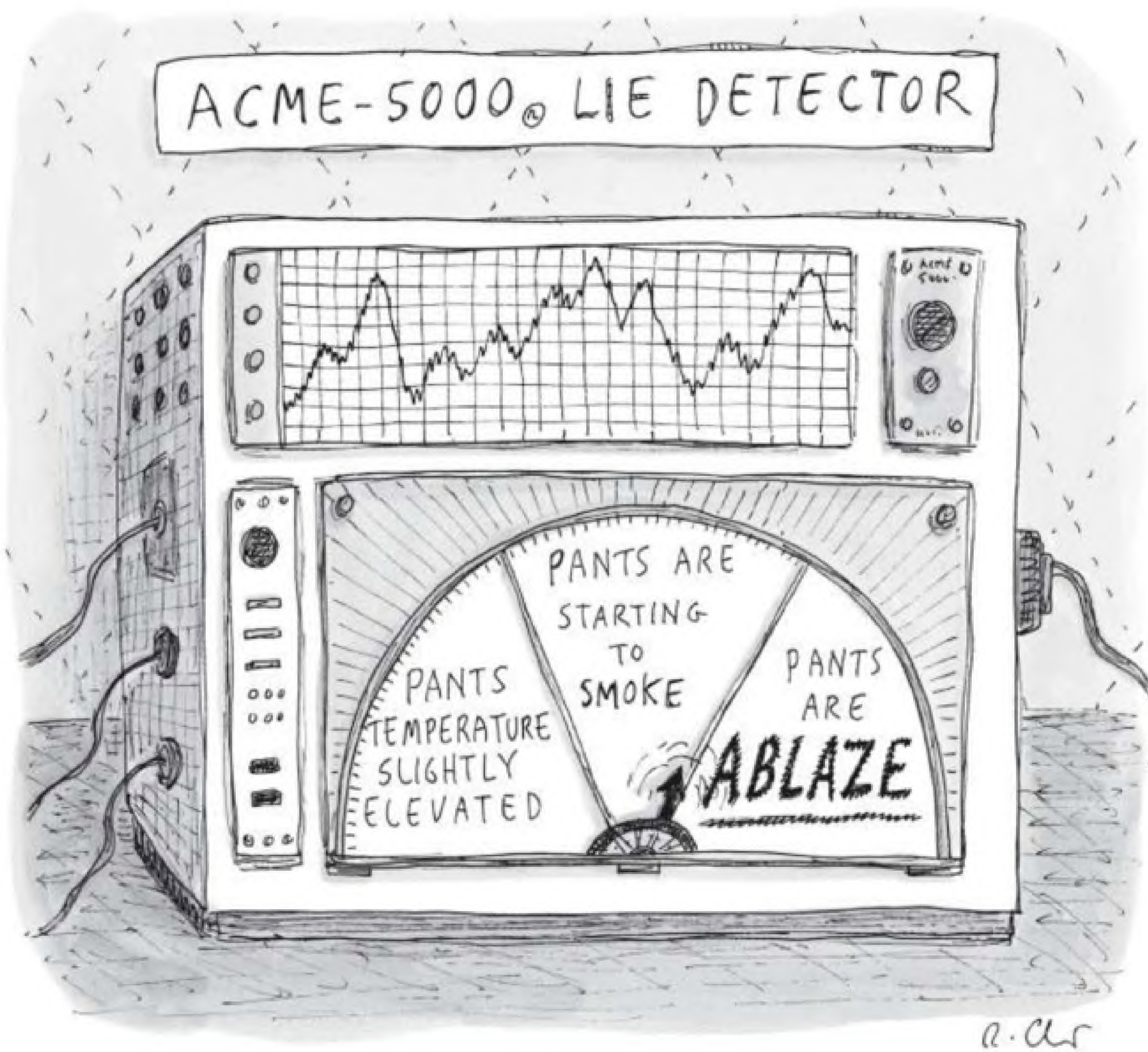
#MadameCezanne
Through March 15

Open 10 a.m. daily
All exhibitions free
with admission

The exhibition is made possible by
The Florence Gould Foundation.

It is supported by an indemnity from the
Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities.

Paul Cézanne, *Madame Cézanne in a Red Armchair*
(detail), ca. 1877, oil on canvas, Museum of Fine
Arts, Boston, Bequest of Robert Treat Paine, 2nd.



called Archive Team—its motto is “We are going to rescue your shit”—says that such notification is usually purely notional: “They were sending e-mail to dead e-mail addresses, saying, ‘Hello, Arthur Dent, your house is going to be crushed.’”) Facebook has been around for only a decade; it won’t be around forever. Twitter is a rare case: it has arranged to archive all of its tweets at the Library of Congress. In 2010, after the announcement, Andy Borowitz tweeted, “Library of Congress to acquire entire Twitter archive—will rename itself Museum of Crap.” Not long after that, Borowitz abandoned that Twitter account. You might, one day, be able to find his old tweets at the Library of Congress, but not anytime soon: the Twitter Archive is not yet open for research. Meanwhile, on the Web, if you click on a link to Borowitz’s tweet about the Museum of Crap, you get this message: “Sorry, that page doesn’t exist!”

The Web dwells in a never-ending present. It is—elementally—ethereal, ephemeral, unstable, and unreliable. Sometimes when you try to visit a Web page what you see is an error message: “Page Not Found.” This is known as “link rot,” and it’s a drag, but it’s better than the al-

ternative. More often, you see an updated Web page; most likely the original has been overwritten. (To overwrite, in computing, means to destroy old data by storing new data in their place; overwriting is an artifact of an era when computer storage was very expensive.) Or maybe the page has been moved and something else is where it used to be. This is known as “content drift,” and it’s more pernicious than an error message, because it’s impossible to tell that what you’re seeing isn’t what you went to look for: the overwriting, erasure, or moving of the original is invisible. For the law and for the courts, link rot and content drift, which are collectively known as “reference rot,” have been disastrous. In providing evidence, legal scholars, lawyers, and judges often cite Web pages in their footnotes; they expect that evidence to remain where they found it as their proof, the way that evidence on paper—in court records and books and law journals—remains where they found it, in libraries and courthouses. But a 2013 survey of law- and policy-related publications found that, at the end of six years, nearly fifty per cent of the URLs cited in those publications no longer worked. According to a 2014 study conducted at Harvard Law School, “more

than 70% of the URLs within the Harvard Law Review and other journals, and 50% of the URLs within United States Supreme Court opinions, do not link to the originally cited information.” The overwriting, drifting, and rotting of the Web is no less catastrophic for engineers, scientists, and doctors. Last month, a team of digital library researchers based at Los Alamos National Laboratory reported the results of an exacting study of three and a half million scholarly articles published in science, technology, and medical journals between 1997 and 2012: one in five links provided in the notes suffers from reference rot. It’s like trying to stand on quicksand.

The footnote, a landmark in the history of civilization, took centuries to invent and to spread. It has taken mere years nearly to destroy. A footnote used to say, “Here is how I know this and where I found it.” A footnote that’s a link says, “Here is what I used to know and where I once found it, but chances are it’s not there anymore.” It doesn’t matter whether footnotes are your stock-in-trade. Everybody’s in a pinch. Citing a Web page as the source for something you know—using a URL as evidence—is ubiquitous. Many people find themselves doing it three or four times before breakfast and five times more before lunch. What happens when your evidence vanishes by dinnertime?

The day after Strelkov’s “We just downed a plane” post was deposited into the Wayback Machine, Samantha Power, the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, told the U.N. Security Council, in New York, that Ukrainian separatist leaders had “boasted on social media about shooting down a plane, but later deleted these messages.” In San Francisco, the people who run the Wayback Machine posted on the Internet Archive’s Facebook page, “Here’s why we exist.”

The address of the Internet Archive is archive.org, but another way to visit is to take a plane to San Francisco and ride in a cab to the Presidio, past cypresses that look as though someone had drawn them there with a smudgy crayon. At 300 Funston Avenue, climb a set of stone steps and knock on the brass door of a Greek Revival temple. You can’t miss it: it’s painted wedding-cake white and it’s got, out front, eight

Corinthian columns and six marble urns.

"We bought it because it matched our logo," Brewster Kahle told me when I met him there, and he wasn't kidding. Kahle is the founder of the Internet Archive and the inventor of the Wayback Machine. The logo of the Internet Archive is a white, pedimented Greek temple. When Kahle started the Internet Archive, in 1996, in his attic, he gave everyone working with him a book called "The Vanished Library," about the burning of the Library of Alexandria. "The idea is to build the Library of Alexandria Two," he told me. (The Hellenism goes further: there's a partial backup of the Internet Archive in Alexandria, Egypt.) Kahle's plan is to one-up the Greeks. The motto of the Internet Archive is "Universal Access to All Knowledge." The Library of Alexandria was open only to the learned; the Internet Archive is open to everyone. In 2009, when the Fourth Church of Christ, Scientist, decided to sell its building, Kahle went to Funston Avenue to see it, and said, "That's our logo!" He loves that the church's cornerstone was laid in 1923: everything published in the United States before that date lies in the public domain. A temple built in copyright's year zero seemed fated. Kahle hops, just slightly, in his shoes when he gets excited. He says, showing me the church, "It's *Greek!*"

Kahle is long-armed and pink-cheeked and public-spirited; his hair is gray and frizzled. He wears round wire-rimmed eyeglasses, linen pants, and patterned button-down shirts. He looks like Mr. Micawber, if Mr. Micawber had left Dickens's London in a time machine and landed in the Pacific, circa 1955, disguised as an American tourist. Instead, Kahle was born in New Jersey in 1960. When he was a kid, he watched "The Rocky and Bullwinkle Show"; it has a segment called "Peabody's Improbable History," which is where the Wayback Machine got its name. Mr. Peabody, a beagle who is also a Harvard graduate and a Nobel laureate, builds a WABAC machine—it's meant to sound like a UNIVAC, one of the first commercial computers—and he uses it to take a boy named Sherman on adventures in time. "We just set it, turn it on, open the door, and there we are—or *were*, really," Peabody says.

When Kahle was growing up, some

of the very same people who were building what would one day become the Internet were thinking about libraries. In 1961, in Cambridge, J. C. R. Licklider, a scientist at the technology firm Bolt, Beranek and Newman, began a two-year study on the future of the library, funded by the Ford Foundation and aided by a team of researchers that included Marvin Minsky, at M.I.T. As Licklider saw it, books were good at displaying information but bad at storing, organizing, and retrieving it. "We should be prepared to reject the schema of the physical book itself," he argued, and to reject "the printed page as a long-term storage device." The goal of the project was to imagine what libraries would be like in the year 2000. Licklider envisioned a library in which computers would replace books and form a "network in which every element of the fund of knowledge is connected to every other element."

In 1963, Licklider became a director at the Department of Defense's Advanced Research Projects Agency (now called DARPA). During his first year, he wrote a seven-page memo in which he addressed his colleagues as "Members and Affiliates of the Intergalactic Computer Network," and proposed the networking of ARPA machines. This sparked the imagination of an electrical engineer named Lawrence Roberts, who later went to ARPA from M.I.T.'s Lincoln Laboratory. (Licklider had helped found both B.B.N. and Lincoln.) Licklider's two-hundred-page Ford Foundation report, "Libraries of the Future," was published in 1965. By then, the network he imagined was already being built, and the word "hyper-text" was being used. By 1969, relying on a data-transmission technology called "packet-switching" which had been developed by a Welsh scientist named Donald Davies, ARPA had built a computer network called ARPANET. By the mid-nineteen-seventies, researchers across the country had developed a network of networks: an internetwork, or, later, an "internet."

Kahle enrolled at M.I.T. in 1978. He studied computer science and engineering with Minsky. After graduating, in 1982, he worked for and started companies that were later sold for a great deal of money. In the late eighties, while work-

ing at Thinking Machines, he developed Wide Area Information Servers, or WAIS, a protocol for searching, navigating, and publishing on the Internet. One feature of WAIS was a time axis; it provided for archiving through version control. (Wikipedia has version control; from any page, you can click on a tab that says "View History" to see all earlier versions of that page.) WAIS came before the Web, and was then overtaken by it. In 1989, at CERN, the European Particle Physics Laboratory, in Geneva, Tim Berners-Lee, an English computer scientist, proposed a hypertext transfer protocol (HTTP) to link pages on what he called the World Wide Web. Berners-Lee toyed with the idea of a time axis for his protocol, too. One reason it was never developed was the preference for the most up-to-date information: a bias against obsolescence. But the chief reason was the premium placed on ease of use. "We were so young then, and the Web was so young," Berners-Lee told me. "I was trying to get it to go. Preservation was not a priority. But we're getting older now." Other scientists involved in building the infrastructure of the Internet are getting older and more concerned, too. Vint Cerf, who worked on ARPANET in the seventies, and now holds the title of Chief Internet Evangelist at Google, has started talking about what he sees as a need for "digital vellum": long-term storage. "I worry that the twenty-first century will become an informational black hole," Cerf e-mailed me. But Kahle has been worried about this problem all along.

"I'm completely in praise of what Tim Berners-Lee did," Kahle told me, "but he kept it very, very simple." The first Web page in the United States was created at SLAC, Stanford's linear-accelerator center, at the end of 1991. Berners-Lee's protocol—which is not only usable but also elegant—spread fast, initially across universities and then into the public. "Emphasized text like [this](#) is a hypertext link," a 1994 version of SLAC's Web page explained. In 1991, a ban on commercial traffic on the Internet was lifted. Then came Web browsers and e-commerce: both Netscape and Amazon were founded in 1994. The Internet as most people now know it—Web-based



and commercial—began in the mid-nineties. Just as soon as it began, it started disappearing.

And the Internet Archive began collecting it. The Wayback Machine is a Web archive, a collection of old Web pages; it is, in fact, *the* Web archive. There are others, but the Wayback Machine is so much bigger than all of them that it's very nearly true that if it's not in the Wayback Machine it doesn't exist. The Wayback Machine is a robot. It crawls across the Internet, in the manner of Eric Carle's very hungry caterpillar, attempting to make a copy of every Web page it can find every two months, though that rate varies. (It first crawled over this magazine's home page, newyorker.com, in November, 1998, and since then has crawled the site nearly seven thousand times, lately at a rate of about six times a day.) The Internet Archive is also stocked with Web pages that are chosen by librarians, specialists like Anatol Shmelev, collecting in subject areas, through a service called Archive It, at archive-it.org, which also allows individuals and institutions to build their own archives. (A copy of everything they save goes into the Wayback Machine, too.) And anyone who wants to can preserve a Web page, at any time, by going to archive.org/web, typing in a URL, and clicking "Save Page Now." (That's how most of the twelve screenshots of Strelkov's VKontakte page entered the Wayback Machine on the day the Malaysia Airlines flight was downed: seven captures that day were made by a robot; the rest were made by humans.)

I was on a panel with Kahle a few years ago, discussing the relationship between material and digital archives. When I met him, I was struck by a story he told about how he once put the entire World Wide Web into a shipping container. He just wanted to see if it would fit. How big is the Web? It turns out, he said, that it's twenty feet by eight feet by eight feet, or, at least, it was on the day he measured it. How much did it weigh? Twenty-six thousand pounds. He thought that *meant* something. He thought people needed to *know* that.

Kahle put the Web into a storage container, but most people measure digital data in bytes. This essay is about two hundred thousand bytes. A book is about a

megabyte. A megabyte is a million bytes. A gigabyte is a billion bytes. A terabyte is a million million bytes. A petabyte is a million gigabytes. In the lobby of the Internet Archive, you can get a free bumper sticker that says "10,000,000,000,000,000 Bytes Archived." Ten petabytes. It's obsolete. That figure is from 2012. Since then, it's doubled.

The Wayback Machine has archived more than four hundred and thirty billion Web pages. The Web is global, but, aside from the Internet Archive, a handful of fledgling commercial enterprises, and a growing number of university Web archives, most Web archives are run by national libraries. They collect chiefly what's in their own domains (the Web Archive of the National Library of Sweden, for instance, includes every Web page that ends in ".se"). The Library of Congress has archived nine billion pages, the British Library six billion. Those collections, like the collections of most national libraries, are in one way or another dependent on the Wayback Machine; the majority also use Heritrix, the Internet Archive's open-source code. The British Library and the Bibliothèque Nationale de France backfilled the early years of their collections by using the Internet Archive's crawls of the .uk and .fr domains. The Library of Congress doesn't actually do its own Web crawling; it contracts with the Internet Archive to do it instead.

The church at 300 Funston Avenue is twenty thousand square feet. The Internet Archive, the building, is open to the public most afternoons. It is, after all, a library. In addition to housing the Wayback Machine, the Internet Archive is a digital library, a vast collection of digitized books, films, television and radio programs, music, and other stuff. Because of copyright, not everything the Internet Archive has digitized is online. In the lobby of the church, there's a scanning station and a listening room: two armchairs, a coffee table, a pair of bookshelves, two iPads, and two sets of headphones. "You can listen to anything here," Kahle says. "We can't put all our music on the Internet, but we can put everything here."

Copyright is the elephant in the archive. One reason the Library of Congress has a very small Web-page collection, compared with the Internet Archive, is that the Library of Congress generally does not collect a Web page without ask-

ing, or, at least, giving notice. "The Internet Archive hoovers," Abbie Grotke, who runs the Library of Congress's Web-archive team, says. "We can't Hoover, because we have to notify site owners and get permissions." (There are some exceptions.) The Library of Congress has something like an opt-in policy; the Internet Archive has an opt-out policy. The Wayback Machine collects every Web page it can find, unless that page is blocked; blocking a Web crawler requires adding only a simple text file, "robots.txt," to the root of a Web site. The Wayback Machine will honor that file and not crawl that site, and it will also, when it comes across a robots.txt, remove all past versions of that site. When the Conservative Party in Britain deleted ten years' worth of speeches from its Web site, it also added a robots.txt, which meant that, the next time the Wayback Machine tried to crawl the site, all its captures of those speeches went away, too. (Some have since been restored.) In a story that ran in the *Guardian*, a Labour Party M.P. said, "It will take more than David Cameron pressing delete to make people forget about his broken promises." And it would take more than a robots.txt to entirely destroy those speeches: they have also been collected in the U.K. Web Archive, at the British Library. The U.K. has what's known as a legal-deposit law; it requires copies of everything published in Britain to be deposited in the British Library. In 2013, that law was revised to include everything published on the U.K. Web. "People put their private lives up there, and we actually don't want that stuff," Andy Jackson, the technical head of the U.K. Web Archive, told me. "We don't want anything that you wouldn't consider a publication." It is hard to say quite where the line lies. But Britain's legal-deposit laws mean that the British Library doesn't have to honor a request to stop collecting.

Legal-deposit laws have been the standard in Western Europe for centuries. They provide national libraries with a form of legal protection unavailable to the Library of Congress, which is not strictly a national library; also, U.S. legal-deposit laws have exempted online-only works. "We are citadels," Gildas Illien, the former Web archivist at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, told me. The Internet Archive is an invaluable public

institution, but it's not a national library, either, and, because the law of copyright has not kept up with technological change, Kahle has been collecting Web sites and making them freely available to the public without the full and explicit protection of the law. "It's extremely audacious," Illien says. "In Europe, no organization, or very few, would take that risk." There's another feature to legal-deposit laws like those in France, a compromise between advocates of archiving and advocates of privacy. Archivists at the BnF can capture whatever Web pages they want, but those collections can be used only in the physical building itself. (For the same reason, you can't check a book out of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France; you have to read it there.) One result is that the BnF's Web archive is used by a handful of researchers, a few dozen a month; the Wayback Machine is used by hundreds of thousands of people a day.

In 2002, Kahle proposed an initiative in which the Internet Archive, in collaboration with national libraries, would become the head of a worldwide consortium of Web archives. (The Internet Archive collects from around the world, and is available in most of the world. Currently, the biggest exception is China—"I guess because we have materials on the archive that the Chinese government would rather not have its citizens see," Kahle says.) This plan didn't work out, but from that failure came the International Internet Preservation Consortium, founded in 2003 and chartered at the BnF. It started with a dozen member institutions; there are now forty-nine.

Something else came out of that consortium. I talked to Illien two days after the massacre in Paris at the offices of *Charlie Hebdo*. "We are overwhelmed, and scared, and even taking the subway is terrifying, and we are scared for our children," Illien said. "The library is a target." When we spoke, the suspects were still at large; hostages had been taken. Illien and his colleagues had started a Web archive about the massacre and the world's response. "Right now the media is full of it, but we know that most of that won't last," he said. "We wrote to our colleagues around the world and asked them to send us feeds to these URLs, to Web sites that were happening, right now, in Paris, so that we could collect them and historians will one day

be able to see." He was very quiet. He said, "When something like that happens, you wonder what you can do from where you sit. Our job is memory."

The plan to found a global Internet archive proved unworkable, partly because national laws relating to legal deposit, copyright, and privacy are impossible to reconcile, but also because Europeans tend to be suspicious of American organizations based in Silicon Valley ingesting their cultural inheritance. Illien told me that, when faced with Kahle's proposal, "national libraries decided they could not rely on a third party," even a nonprofit, "for such a fundamental heritage and preservation mission." In this same spirit, and in response to Google Books, European libraries and museums collaborated to launch Europeana, a digital library, in 2008. The Googleplex, Google's headquarters, is thirty-eight miles away from the Internet Archive, but the two could hardly be more different. In 2009, after the Authors Guild and the Association of American Publishers sued Google Books for copyright infringement, Kahle opposed the proposed settlement, charging Google with effectively attempting to privatize the public-library system. In 2010, he was on the founding steering committee of the Digital Public Library of America, which is

something of an American version of Europeana; its mission is to make what's in libraries, archives, and museums "freely available to the world . . . in the face of increasingly restrictive digital options."

Kahle is a digital utopian attempting to stave off a digital dystopia. He views the Web as a giant library, and doesn't think it ought to belong to a corporation, or that anyone should have to go through a portal owned by a corporation in order to read it. "We are building a library that is us," he says, "and it is ours."

When the Internet Archive bought the church, Kahle recalls, "we had the idea that we'd convert it into a library, but what does a library look like anymore? So we've been settling in, and figuring that out."

From the lobby, we headed up a flight of yellow-carpeted stairs to the chapel, an enormous dome-ceilinged room filled with rows of oak pews. There are arched stained-glass windows, and the dome is a stained-glass window, too, open to the sky, like an eye of God. The chapel seats seven hundred people. The floor is sloped. "At first, we thought we'd flatten the floor and pull up the pews," Kahle said, as he gestured around the room. "But we couldn't. They're just too beautiful."

On the wall on either side of the altar,



"Do you have any hand sanitizer?"

wooden slates display what, when this was a church, had been the listing of the day's hymn numbers. The archivists of the Internet have changed those numbers. One hymn number was 314. "Do you know what that is?" Kahle asked. It was a test, and something of a trick question, like when someone asks you what's your favorite B track on the White Album. "Pi," I said, dutifully, or its first three digits, anyway. Another number was 42. Kahle gave me an inquiring look. I rolled my eyes. Seriously? But it is serious, in a way. It's hard not to worry that the Wayback Machine will end up like the computer in Douglas Adams's "Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy," which is asked what is the meaning of "life, the universe, and everything," and, after thinking for millions of years, says, "Forty-two." If the Internet can be archived, will it ever have anything to tell us? Honestly, isn't most of the Web trash? And, if everything's saved, won't there be too much of it for anyone to make sense of any of it? Won't it be useless?

The Wayback Machine is humongous, and getting humongouser. You can't search it the way you can search the Web, because it's too big and what's in there isn't sorted, or indexed, or catalogued in any of the many ways in which a paper archive is organized; it's not ordered in any way at all, except by URL and by date. To use it, all you can do is type in a URL, and choose the date for it that you'd like to look at. It's more like a phone book than like an archive. Also, it's riddled with errors. One kind is created when the dead Web grabs content from the live Web, sometimes because Web archives often crawl different parts of the same page at different times: text in one year, photographs in another. In October, 2012, if you asked the Wayback Machine to show you what *cnn.com* looked like on September 3, 2008, it would have shown you a page featuring stories about the 2008 McCain-Obama Presidential race, but the advertisement alongside it would have been for the 2012 Romney-Obama debate. Another problem is that there is no equivalent to what, in a physical archive, is a perfect provenance. Last July, when the computer scientist Michael Nelson tweeted the archived screenshots of



Strelkov's page, a man in St. Petersburg tweeted back, "Yep. Perfect tool to produce 'evidence' of any kind." Kahle is careful on this point. When asked to authenticate a screenshot, he says, "We can say, 'This is what we know. This is what our records say. This is how we received this information, from which apparent Web site, at this IP address.' But to actually say that this happened in the past is something that we can't say, in an ontological way." Nevertheless, screenshots from Web archives have held up in court, repeatedly. And, as Kahle points out, "They turn out to be much more trustworthy than most of what people try to base court decisions on."

You can do something more like keyword searching in smaller subject collections, but nothing like Google searching (there is no relevance ranking, for instance), because the tools for doing anything meaningful with Web archives are years behind the tools for creating those archives. Doing research in a paper archive is to doing research in a Web archive as going to a fish market is to being thrown in the middle of an ocean; the only thing they have in common is that both involve fish.

The Web archivists at the British Library had the brilliant idea of bringing in a team of historians to see what they could do with the U.K. Web Archive; it wasn't all that much, but it was helpful to see what they *tried* to do, and why it didn't work. Gareth Millward, a young scholar interested in the history of disability, wanted to trace the history of the Royal National Institute for the Blind. It turned out that the institute had endorsed a talking watch, and its name appeared in every advertisement for the watch. "This one advert appears thousands of times in the database," Millward told me. It cluttered and bogged down nearly everything he attempted. Last year, the Internet Archive made an archive of its .gov domain, tidied up and compressed the data, and made it available to a group of scholars, who tried very hard to make something of the material. It was so difficult to recruit scholars to use the data that the project was mostly a wash. Kahle says, "I give it a B." Stanford's Web archivist, Nicholas Tay-

lor, thinks it's a chicken-and-egg problem. "We don't know what tools to build, because no research has been done, but the research hasn't been done because we haven't built any tools."

The footnote problem, though, stands a good chance of being fixed. Last year, a tool called Perma.cc was launched. It was developed by the Harvard Library Innovation Lab, and its founding supporters included more than sixty law-school libraries, along with the Harvard Berkman Center for Internet and Society, the Internet Archive, the Legal Information Preservation Alliance, and the Digital Public Library of America. Perma.cc promises "to create citation links that will never break." It works something like the Wayback Machine's "Save Page Now." If you're writing a scholarly paper and want to use a link in your footnotes, you can create an archived version of the page you're linking to, a "permalink," and anyone later reading your footnotes will, when clicking on that link, be brought to the permanently archived version. Perma.cc has already been adopted by law reviews and state courts; it's only a matter of time before it's universally adopted as the standard in legal, scientific, and scholarly citation.

Perma.cc is a patch, an excellent patch. Herbert Van de Sompel, a Belgian computer scientist who works at the Los Alamos National Laboratory, is trying to reweave the fabric of the Web. It's not possible to go back in time and rewrite the HTTP protocol, but Van de Sompel's work involves adding to it. He and Michael Nelson are part of the team behind Memento, a protocol that you can use on Google Chrome as a Web extension, so that you can navigate from site to site, and from time to time. He told me, "Memento allows you to say, 'I don't want to see this link where it points me to today; I want to see it around the time that this page was written, for example.'" It searches not only the Wayback Machine but also every major public Web archive in the world, to find the page closest in time to the time you'd like to travel to. ("A world with one archive is a really bad idea," Van de Sompel points out. "You need redundance.") This month, the Memento group is launching a Web portal called Time Travel. Eventually, if Memento and projects like it work, the Web will have a time dimension, a way to get from now to then,

effortlessly, a fourth dimension. And then the past will be inescapable, which is as terrifying as it is interesting.

At the back of the chapel, up a short flight of stairs, there are two niches, arched alcoves the same shape and size as the stained-glass windows. Three towers of computers stand within each niche, and ten computers are stacked in each tower: black, rectangular, and humming. There are towers like this all over the building; these are only six of them. Still, this is *it*.

Kahle stands on his tiptoes, sinks back into his sneakers, and then bounds up the stairs. He is like a very sweet boy who, having built a very fine snowman, drags his mother outdoors to see it before it melts. I almost expect him to take my hand. I follow him up the stairs.

"Think of them as open stacks," he says, showing me the racks. "You can walk right up to them and touch them." He reaches out and traces the edge of one of the racks with the tip of his index finger. "If you had all the words in every book in the Library of Congress, it would be about an inch, here," he says, measuring the distance between his forefinger and thumb.

Up close, they're noisy. It's mainly fans, cooling the machines. At first, the noise was a problem: a library is supposed to be quiet. Kahle had sound-proofing built into the walls.

Each unit has a yellow and a green light, glowing steadily: power indicators. Then, there are blue lights, flickering.

"Every time a light blinks, someone is uploading or downloading," Kahle explains. Six hundred thousand people use the Wayback Machine every day, conducting two thousand searches a second. "You can *see* it." He smiles as he watches. "They're glowing books!" He waves his arms. "They glow when they're being read!"

One day last summer, a missile was launched into the sky and a plane crashed in a field. "We just downed a plane," a soldier told the world. People fell to the earth, their last passage. Somewhere, someone hit "Save Page Now."

Where is the Internet's memory, the history of our time?

"It's right *here!*" Kahle cries.


The machine hums and is muffled. It is sacred and profane. It is eradicable and unbearable. And it glows, against the dark. ♦

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TESTING TIME

Jeb Bush's educational experiment.

BY ALEC MACGILLIS

In December, Jeb Bush posted an update on his Facebook page which began by reporting that, over Thanksgiving, he and his family had “shared good food and watched a whole lot of football.” He added, “We also talked about the future of our nation. As a result of these conversations and thoughtful consideration of the kind of strong leadership I think America needs, I have decided to actively explore the possibility of running for President of the United States.”

The wording of the announcement was oddly diffident. It was widely known that Bush had been “actively exploring” the possibility of a campaign at least since the spring, when he started showing up at the gym in the grand Biltmore Hotel in Coral Gables, where he keeps his office, with a personal trainer and new workout gear. But there had been as yet no signs of a commitment. “It’s the telegraph people have been waiting for,” Jim Nicholson, a former Republican National Committee chairman and Cabinet secretary under President George W. Bush, said.

The announcement inevitably renewed questions about the desirability of political dynasties and about whether Jeb was being propelled to run, in part, by fraternal rivalry. “There’s always been a friendly competition among the siblings in the family, and that’s just human nature, I suppose,” George P. Bush, Jeb’s older son, told me. As Jeb, who was the governor of Florida for two terms, has followed his brother’s career, he has also stood apart from it. “There is kind of George W.’s world, and then there’s Jeb’s world, and frankly there’s not a lot of intersection,” Mark McKinnon, who was a senior adviser to George W.’s Presidential campaigns, said. Jeb is more introverted and more ideological than both his father, George H. W. Bush, whose politics are driven more by personal asso-

ciations than by doctrine, and his brother, whose conservatism is more instinctual than considered. It was Jeb who signed the nation’s first “Stand Your Ground” self-defense law, and fought to keep Terri Schiavo on life support.

Now, though, as a result of the rightward shift in the Republican Party, Bush is being viewed as a moderate in the emerging Presidential field. He has strong support among the Party’s establishment and donor class, but his popularity among the current conservative rank and file is difficult to gauge. Since he left office, Bush has maintained a national profile through his work on the issue with which, as governor, he had sought to make his biggest mark: education reform. But, after leading the way in pushing a conservative vision for America’s schools, Bush is now caught in the midst of an unexpected upheaval on the issue within his own party.

His level of enthusiasm for running has also been difficult to assess. He has often cited worries about the effect that a campaign would have on his family, especially on his wife, Columba, who dislikes the role of political spouse. George P. Bush told me that it would be hard for his father to relinquish the life in business that he has led since leaving office, in 2007. “People forget that before he went into public service he was in real estate and has always had a business mind,” his son said.

The family that, over three generations, has served in the White House (twice), the Senate, the House of Representatives, and the governors’ mansions of two states is also a family of businessmen. Prescott Bush was a partner at the investment bank Brown Brothers Harriman, but, even as he thrived on Wall Street, with a house in Greenwich, Connecticut, and three

live-in maids, he declined to run for a vacant House seat in 1946, because he didn’t think he could afford it. He was finally elected to the Senate in 1952, at the age of fifty-seven. His son George H. W. Bush didn’t enter politics until he had become a millionaire in the Texas oil industry; he was elected to Congress in 1966, when he was forty-two. Doug Wead, who served as an adviser to both Presidents Bush, told me, “I don’t think it’s about money for money’s sake. It’s a way of defining who I am and where I sit in the history of the family: ‘Can I do it? Can I be a real man?’ Just imagine the pressure. The first step in life in the Bush family is: Can I make a million?”

After college, Jeb worked for the Texas Commerce Bank in Venezuela before returning to join his siblings—George; their younger brothers, Neil and Marvin; and their sister, Dorothy—on their father’s 1980 Presidential campaign. Jeb campaigned mostly in Florida; having learned enough Spanish to court his wife, whom he met on a high-school exchange trip to Mexico, he had become fluent while in Caracas, an asset in Miami’s Little Havana. After George H. W. Bush lost to Ronald Reagan in the primaries, Jeb and Columba settled in Miami to raise their three children—George P., Noelle, and Jeb, Jr.

Armando Codina, a Cuban-American real-estate developer who had supported George H. W. Bush’s campaign, offered Jeb a forty-per-cent stake, with no money down, in his company, Codina Partners. Bush’s role was to find tenants for commercial developments, and he easily won over colleagues and clients with his unassuming manner. A few separate deals he was involved in came under scrutiny, including one with a company that sold water pumps in Nigeria, but Bush was never accused of any wrongdoing. He considered running



Bush has maintained a national profile on the issue with which, as governor, he had sought to make his biggest mark: education reform.

for Congress, but, according to Peter and Rochelle Schweizer's biography "The Bushes," his father persuaded him to wait until he had made more money. He served as the chairman of the Dade County G.O.P. and, in 1987, became the state commerce secretary under Governor Bob Martinez but left the post less than two years later to work on his father's successful Presidential campaign. Around that time, he decided to run for governor, and, in 1992, with his father's reelection in doubt, he began to focus on a gubernatorial campaign for the 1994 election. (By then, he had a net worth of more than two million dollars.) In Texas, his brother did the same, which the family viewed as an intrusion on Jeb's more serious effort. After Bush senior left the White House, he spent far more time campaigning in Florida than in Texas.

Unlike George, Jeb embraced the ascendant right-wing orthodoxy: he declared himself a "head-banging conservative"; vowed to "club this government into submission"; and warned that "we are transforming our society to a collectivist policy." On Election Night, he lost narrowly to the incumbent, Lawton Chiles. George Bush, having shown himself to be an unexpectedly able candidate, with a more modulated tone than his brother, beat the incumbent Texas governor, Ann Richards, by more than eight points.

After the loss, Jeb returned to business, working primarily with Codina Partners again. It wasn't clear if he would continue to pursue a political career. Tom Slade, a former chairman of the Florida G.O.P. (who died in October), told me that Bush had said, "I don't know if I'm going to run for governor again or not, because I'd rather go settle some stuff with my wife." Campaigning had been a strain on the family, but, Slade added, "I remember having heard Columba say, 'Jebby really loves politics,' and kind of sigh."

It became apparent to Bush that he had emphasized a conservative agenda at the expense of an organizing mission in his campaign. He had focussed mainly on crime and welfare reform, and, if he were to run again, he would need "to be sure his platform was palatable to a larger community," as T. Willard Fair, the head of the Miami affiliate of the Urban League, put it. In 1995, Bush found that platform. Early that year, he called Fair and said that he wanted to contribute some money left over from his campaign to the Urban League. Fair thought that Bush would present a check, pose for a picture, and leave. But the two men spent ninety minutes discussing the failure of the Dade County schools to educate black students, who were twenty-four per cent more likely

than white students to drop out. Fair, a garrulous man with a conservative bent, told me, "Jeb said, 'Why don't you start a charter school?' I said, 'What's a charter school?'"

That year, Bush found a compatible source for ideas on education when he joined the board of the Heritage Foundation, which was generating papers and proposals to break up what it viewed as the government-run monopoly of the public-school system through free-market competition, with charters and private-school vouchers. Bush found school choice philosophically appealing. "Competition means everybody gets better," he said.

He enlisted Fair to help promote a state law authorizing charter schools, which, unlike vouchers, were gaining some Democratic supporters, including President Bill Clinton, who saw them as a way to allow educators to innovate within the public-school system. The law passed in 1996, with bipartisan support, and that year Bush and Fair founded the first charter school in the state—an elementary school in an impoverished, largely African-American section of Miami, called the Liberty City Charter School. Bush brought his mother in for classroom visits and dropped by unannounced to make sure that things were running smoothly. If he found wastepaper lying around, he'd leave it on the desk of the principal, Katrina Wilson-Davis. The message was clear, she recalls: "Just because kids are poor and at risk doesn't mean that their environment shouldn't be clean and orderly."

Bush decided to make a second run for governor, in 1998. He chose Frank Brogan, Florida's education commissioner, as his running mate, and railed against the state's graduation rate, which was about fifty per cent, and fourth-grade reading scores that were nearly the worst in the country. He unveiled the A+ Plan, which relied heavily on Heritage Foundation proposals for holding schools more accountable; it imposed a strict A-F grading system at all levels, based on students' scores on the state's assessment test, the FCAT, and provided additional funding to schools with good grades and stipulated that students at schools with poor grades would receive taxpayer-funded

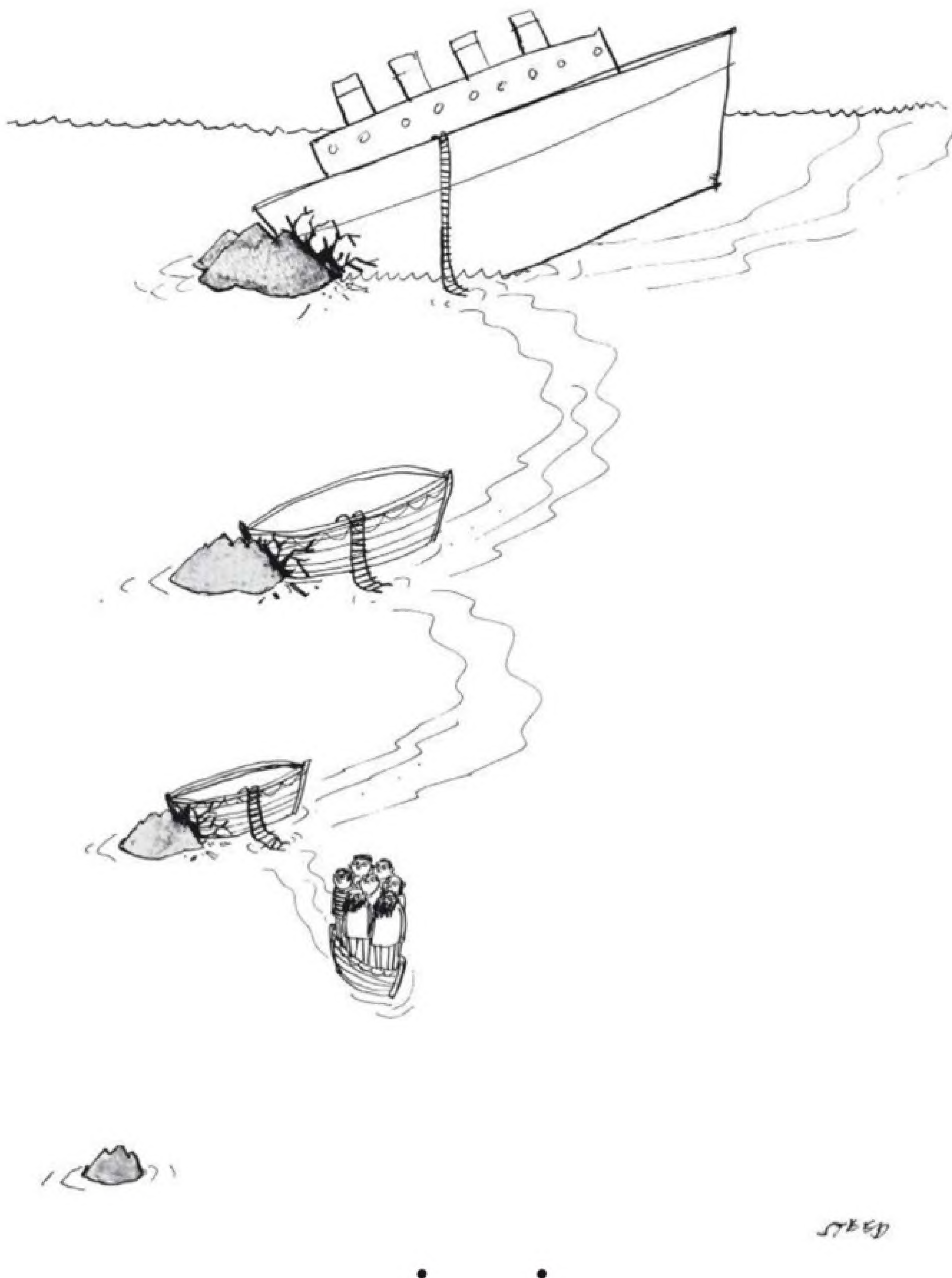


"I thought your show-and-tell was really brave."

vouchers to attend private and parochial schools. This time, Bush won easily. He faced a weaker opponent than he had in 1994, but his new agenda seemed to help: he doubled his share of the black vote.

Brogan, a former fifth-grade teacher and middle-school principal, was nominally in charge of the education portfolio. But Bush's most influential adviser was Patricia Levesque, a former legislative aide to the state House Republican leadership and a graduate of Bob Jones University, the fundamentalist Christian school in South Carolina. (She greeted a new hire in Bush's administration by asking him if he had "found a church home" yet in Tallahassee.) Brogan had drafted the A+ Plan into a bill, but Bush called for revisions to give its accountability measures a harder edge. Within months, the Republican-led legislature had passed it, providing Florida with one of the highest-stakes testing regimens in the country, and the first statewide voucher program.

Some friends and associates saw personal motivations behind Bush's initiatives. Patrick Riccards, who, as counsel for the federal government's National Reading Panel, discussed education reform with Bush, said, "As the father of Hispanic kids, you become far more sensitive to disparities—kids who look like your kids not getting the skills they need or getting into the right colleges." (Bush's children attended private schools in Miami and Jacksonville.) Others detected a competitive desire to surpass his brother's agenda in Texas. Governors around the country were taking up education reform, but the Bushes were prominent in the field. George W. Bush had initiated his program four years earlier, but it essentially built on Ann Richards's measures to help struggling schools, such as insuring that they got adequate funding, and it had bipartisan support. It was also far less aggressive—it emphasized testing, but included fewer penalties for failing schools and steered clear of vouchers. Sandy Kress, who was a senior education adviser to George W. Bush in the White House, said that he "really thought this is mainly about improving public schools."



Jeb's program, by contrast, was of a piece with his larger agenda to privatize state-run services, from prisons to Medicaid. He also recognized the long-term political benefits of upending the system. According to Jim Warford, a county school superintendent in North Florida, whom Bush selected to be his K-12 schools chancellor in 2003, "He saw the teachers' unions as one of the foundations of the Democratic Party, and he saw a great advantage—that anything he could do to undercut the teachers' union would have a political return."

Advisers to both brothers saw little evidence that they discussed the issue. "They operated through their staffs," Warford said. "If anything, a more accurate comparison would be two N.F.L.

coaches trying to steal each other's playbooks and game plans." But if Jeb was envious when George was elected President, in 2000, he did not express it. "If he has any of that feeling, he doesn't show it," Lucy Morgan, who covered him for the *St. Petersburg Times* and knows him socially, said. Instead, he further immersed himself in education research, and brought in national experts, such as Reid Lyon, a brain-development researcher at the National Institutes of Health, for private briefings. Even his opponents concede that he was very well informed. Dan Gelber, a Democrat who served in the Florida legislature, recalls an e-mail debate with Bush about the rating system for test scores. "We ended up having this very esoteric exchange,



“Hey, folks—assuming everyone is on board and, barring any unforeseen technical glitches—it’s showtime.”

and I remember thinking, He either has a roomful of experts writing these e-mails or he really knows something.”

During his first term, Bush’s agenda suffered some setbacks. Voters approved a referendum capping class size at twenty-five students in high school and required smaller classes in lower grades. Courts ruled his main voucher program unconstitutional, because it sent taxpayer money to religious schools. In response, he adopted a funding model in which corporations donated to the program in return for tax credits. Still, after a term that also featured a big tax cut for wealthy Floridians, he was easily reelected, in 2002.

By then, President Bush was implementing his signature legislation, the No Child Left Behind Act, which required schools to meet gradually higher scores on annual tests, set by the states, in order to receive additional federal funding. Jeb Bush made it known that he thought his own approach superior, because it sought to grade schools on improvements in individual students’ scores, rather than just on schools’ performance in a given year. “There were lots of conversations about the work in Texas and how Florida had improved

on that,” Warford said. According to education officials, Jeb’s team had little respect for Rod Paige, the former Houston schools superintendent whom George W. Bush had named Secretary of Education. “It was a little prickly in Florida,” Sandy Kress, who worked on the implementation of No Child Left Behind, said. “It was ‘We’re going to do it our way and can do it better.’”

Florida’s population grew by 2.5 million during Bush’s eight years as governor—almost the equivalent of adding another Miami, Jacksonville, Tampa, Orlando, and St. Petersburg. Suburbs colonized the former swamplands beyond the Miami airport, the orange and palmetto groves east of Tampa, and the farmland near Fort Myers. The growth, which created jobs in construction and real estate, was fuelled, notoriously, by lax mortgage-lending practices. But it was also fuelled by charter schools.

Developers of new subdivisions teamed up with companies that were opening up charter schools less as a means to innovate than as a way to benefit from Florida’s boom. The “Mc-Charter,” as they became known, were

paid for with public money—not just their daily operations but often their buildings, too, since Florida was one of a few states that allowed taxpayer revenue to be used for the construction of charters. But, as charters, the schools were free of public oversight and collective-bargaining agreements. In Osceola County, outside Orlando, a charter school was built next to a traditional public school to absorb students from an expanding subdivision—a “win-win-win for everybody,” Bush said at the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Under the 1996 law, only nonprofit groups could apply to open a charter school. To get around that, for-profit charter companies set up foundations to file the application and then hire those companies to operate the schools. The St. Petersburg *Times* reported that by 2002 for-profit companies were managing three-quarters of the state’s newly approved charter schools. According to the newspaper, the companies typically took at least a twelve-per-cent cut of a school’s budget—about two hundred thousand dollars a year for an elementary school and double that for a middle school or a high school. At the same time, the charters were spending about two thousand dollars less per student than traditional public schools (which received relatively low funding, by national standards), a practice that often resulted in inexperienced teachers and spartan facilities. Still, many parents were attracted by the schools’ selective aura, smaller class size, and strict behavior codes. The principal of Ryder Elementary, which served families employed at the Miami headquarters of the Ryder trucking company, explained, “We really operate like a private school.”

This struck some people as being far from the spirit of charter reform. “Should we be paying money for real-estate companies posing as charter schools?” Sherman Dorn, an education-policy expert who taught at the University of South Florida, said to me. Teachers’ unions and some Democratic legislators spoke out against the for-profit schools. But, in 2002, Bush signed a law allowing charter operators who were denied approval by local school boards to appeal to the state. In

2003, he signed a law to eliminate the state's cap on the number of charters, which had been set at twenty-eight in the largest counties. Republican lawmakers fought to increase the amount of taxpayer money available for charter construction, and to let developers build schools using the subdivision homeowner fees that they used for pools and other amenities.

Bush, like other proponents of education reform, wanted parents to have the freedom to choose from various schools. "Florida has the largest, most vibrant charter-school movement in the country," he said at the opening of a for-profit charter high school in Fort Myers. He had no personal financial stake in the school boom, a point that his spokeswoman, Kristy Campbell, emphasizes. "Governor Bush does not personally profit in any way from his education-reform advocacy work," she said. (Bush declined to be interviewed for this article.) But some of his political allies in the state did. In 1997, Jonathan Hage, a former Heritage Foundation staffer who had helped Bush set up the Liberty City Charter School, started Charter Schools USA. Hage told the *St. Petersburg Times* that he had simply identified a "classic business opportunity." Charter Schools USA, whose headquarters occupy a building across from a Jaguar dealership in the Fort Lauderdale suburbs, now manages seventy schools in seven states and has nearly three hundred million dollars in revenue.

In 2004, Robert Cambo, a former Codina Partners employee who had started his own building firm, worked with Hage's company to develop two schools. Al Cardenas, who became the chairman of the Florida Republican Party in 1999, went on to be a lobbyist for Charter Schools USA and the Florida Consortium of Charter Schools. (Until recently, he was the chairman of the American Conservative Union.) Octavio Visiedo, a Bush family friend, was the superintendent of the Dade County school system. He retired in 1996 and started a company that evolved into Imagine Schools, which now has thirty-four thousand students nationwide. Cardenas, who advised Visiedo as he set up the company, told me that the Governor's sup-

port for the growing industry was pivotal: "Bush was helping me get the movement going." When asked about the money to be made in for-profit charters, Cardenas said, "I don't care about how much money someone makes. I care about how they're educating kids. It's kind of socialistic to decry an organization for making money. What people should be concerned about is what's the quality of it."

The quality was difficult to assess. By 2006, Jeb's last year in office, there were more than three hundred charter schools (for-profit and nonprofit) in Florida, with more than a hundred thousand students, most of them in big metropolitan areas such as Miami and Tampa. But the state made only sporadic efforts to track their performance. The 1996 law called for annual statewide reports on the schools, but none were produced until Novem-

ber of 2006. Test scores in lower grades were found to be slightly higher than at traditional public schools, and slightly lower in the higher grades. The reading test-score gap between black students and white students in elementary grades decreased at about the same rate as in traditional schools, but in the charter high schools the gap widened. However, direct comparisons were difficult, because the charters took about twenty per cent fewer low-income and special-needs students. It was even harder to track the impact of vouchers, because the private and parochial schools that accepted them were not required to administer state tests.

As Bush saw it, some schools and companies were inferior, but that situation would sort itself out over time. Kristy Campbell told me, "Expanding school choice was a priority for his administration." However, she added, just



"This will never work. I can only spoon to the left."

as with traditional public schools, Bush “believes charter schools should be closed if students aren’t learning.” Frank Brogan, Bush’s lieutenant governor, told me, “The Governor is a free-market guy.” But Andy Ford, the president of the Florida Education Association, the teachers’ union that was trying to halt the spread of for-profit charters, believes that although Bush “does genuinely care about trying to make kids’ lives better,” his approach created “a closed circuit of people making a lot of money on so-called ‘reform.’”

By the end of Bush’s second term, fourth-grade reading scores in the state had improved sharply, though eighth- and tenth-grade scores were more middling. (Since Bush left office, gains in test scores at all levels have been relatively incremental; graduation rates have steadily increased, but they remain among the nation’s worst.) Nevertheless, Bush saw his education record as his central accomplishment. “The fact is that more kids are learning now and we’re not dumbing down the curriculum,” he said.

When Bush left office, in 2007, he and Columba returned to Miami. He signed on with a commercial-real-estate brokerage, started a management-consulting firm—Jeb Bush & Associates, with Jeb, Jr.—and joined at least four corporate boards. Again, one of the ventures he was associated with—InnoVida, a startup maker of inexpensive building materials—ran into legal difficulties, but again he was not implicated. He also became a paid adviser to Lehman Brothers, just before the financial crisis, and gave the kinds of remunerative speech that former governors tend to give.

Bush continued to stay active in education policy. In 2008, he launched the Foundation for Excellence in Education, a nonprofit that promoted his reforms and urged other states to adopt similar practices. The organization, led by Patricia Levesque, holds an annual two-day, expenses-paid summit for school administrators and elected state officials. The foundation also organized a half-dozen state education commissioners—called “chiefs for change”—to promote Bush’s agenda at conferences around the country.

By this time, school reform had become a bipartisan national movement. No Child Left Behind had made its mark across the country, as local leaders, such as the mayors Michael Bloomberg, in New York, and Cory Booker, in Newark, championed their roles in raising scores, and many Democratic leaders, including the newly elected President, Barack Obama, and his Education Secretary, Arne Duncan, accepted the necessity of testing-based accountability. (The Administration’s Race to the Top initiative rewarded states that engaged in aggressive reform.) Meanwhile, as teachers and administrators struggled to meet the law’s demands, the education industry responded. For more than a century, private companies had sold textbooks and other educational supplies to public schools, but now, particularly with the advent of the Internet, the marketplace exploded. The range of new offerings included the state tests. In Florida alone, the British publishing conglomerate Pearson was paid two hundred and fifty million dollars over four years, to administer the FCAT. Then there were test-prep products, mostly digital, that promised to improve scores by helping teachers track students’ progress. (Neil Bush had entered the field, with Ignite, an education-software firm geared toward middle-school social studies, science, and math, which he started in 1999.)

In 2010, Rupert Murdoch’s News Corp. launched an education-technology division, called Amplify. It was led by Joel Klein, who had been the New York City schools chancellor under Bloomberg. Murdoch said, “When it comes to K through 12 education, we see a five-hundred-billion-dollar sector in the U.S. alone that is waiting desperately to be transformed.” Amplify’s products include digital tablets loaded with instructional programs and games (in one, Tom Sawyer battles the Brontë sisters), for use in K-12 classes. The company says that it has sold several hundred thousand tablets to schools across the country.

Companies soon came to see the Foundation for Excellence in Education as an ideal platform to promote a range of ideas and products to state officials. Murdoch gave the keynote address at the 2011 summit.

In 2012, the foundation earned revenues of ten million dollars, much of it donations from education companies. Those companies sent representatives to the summits, where foundation officials set aside time for them to have “donor meetings” with the chiefs for change.

Sometimes, according to e-mails obtained by the watchdog organization In the Public Interest, Levesque pitched the state commissioners on behalf of the companies. In July, 2011, she encouraged Chris Cerf, the New Jersey commissioner, to accept an offer from Dell of a demo “teacher dashboard,” a digital classroom-management system. (“Public education is a public enterprise,” Cerf told me. “But it’s also true that, like all public entities, it also relies on collaborations.”) In 2012, Levesque e-mailed Tony Bennett, the Indiana commissioner, urging him to consider an overture from Reasoning Mind, which sells a math software program for grades two through six. She told Bennett that Jeb Bush “would really appreciate you and your staff taking time to meet with” the company’s president “when you get a chance to review his curriculum.”

In 2010, Bush had used the foundation to launch an initiative called Digital Learning Now, which promoted the benefits of “virtual schools,” providing online instruction. Virtual schools had once been a fringe market for families that homeschooled their children. But, as more school districts faced budget cuts and overcrowded classrooms, some required students to take classes online—in all grades, but mostly in high school—and the industry surged. The quality of instruction is uneven. Classes are typically two or three times larger than in traditional schools, and teachers, who work from home, earn much less. In 2012, the National Education Policy Center studied one of the largest virtual-school companies, K12, and found that its students lagged in math and reading proficiency and had lower graduation rates than those in traditional schools. In a statement at the time, K12 disputed the N.E.P.C.’s methodology.

Yet Bush, a longtime technophile, saw in virtual schools the same revolutionary potential to expand choice

Things Change

AFTER TWELVE YEARS, WYLIE DUFRESNE'S wd~50 RESTAURANT, in N.Y.C., is closed. THE BUILDING IS BEING TORN DOWN. AT THE AUCTION EVERYTHING WAS FOR SALE: PLATES, GLASSES, POTS, PANS, WHISKS, STRAINERS, MANDOLINES, OVENS - EVERYTHING. THERE WERE TWO ESPECIALLY BEAUTIFUL ITEMS, QUICKLY SOLD and GOING TO OTHER RESTAURANTS. GOOD LUCK TO ALL.

THE PELOUZE hundred-pound TABLE SCALE (sold without the FISH) WENT TO LIBERTY HOUSE RESTAURANT in JERSEY CITY FOR \$150.



THE LEM SAUSAGE MAKER (sold without the SAUSAGES) FETCHED \$150 from the owner OF LITTLE SAL'S, on 16th Street.



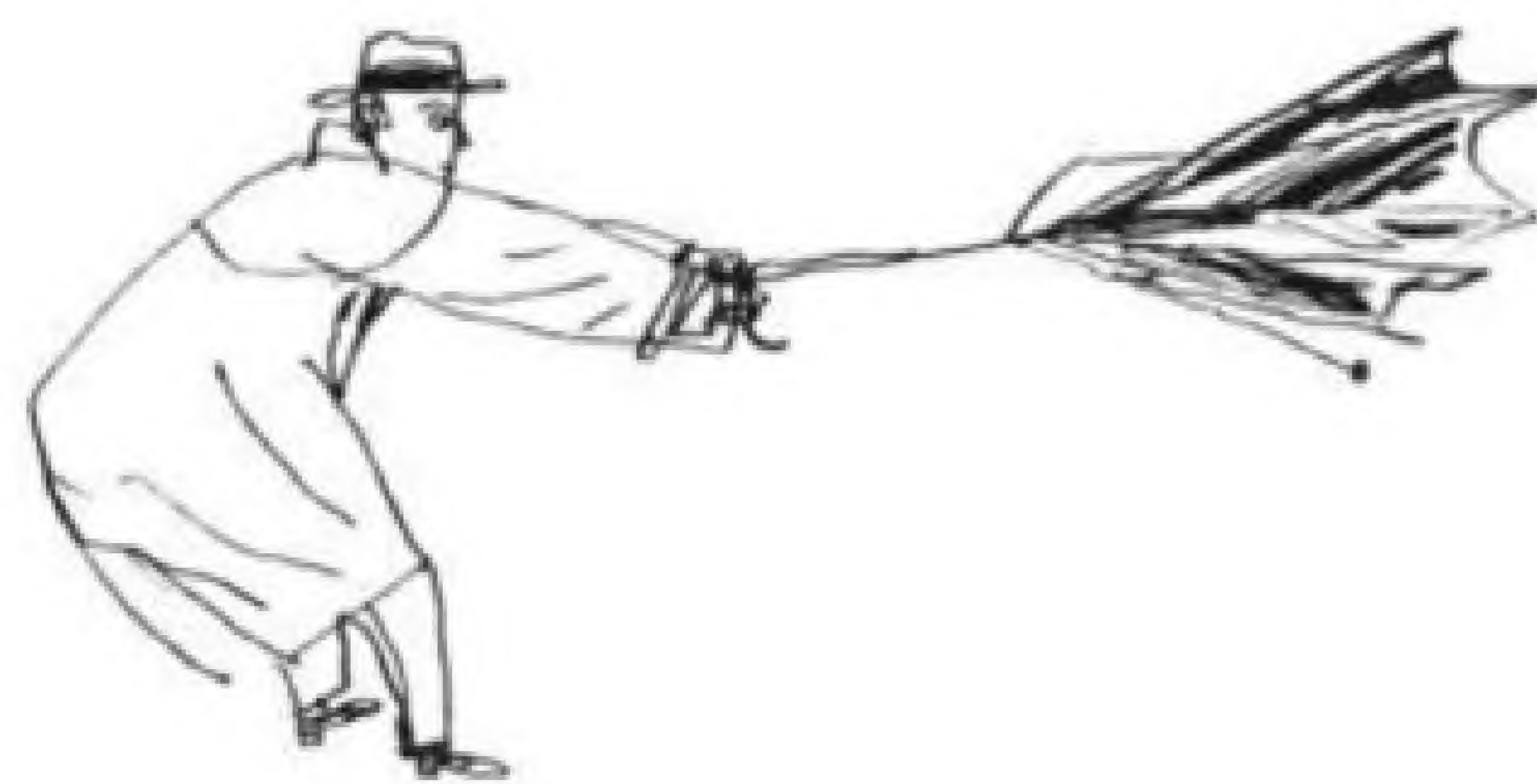
that he had seen in vouchers and charters. Unions consider virtual schooling “an even bigger threat than vouchers because it’s such a disruptive idea,” he told *National Review*. In 2010, he convened a “digital learning council” that included virtual-school executives from around the country. It issued a report urging states to adopt industry-friendly measures, such as eliminating limits on virtual-school enrollment. Several states proceeded to do so. In Maine, according to a 2012 investigation by the *Portland Press-Herald*, foundation staff members essentially wrote legislation backed by the Republican governor, Paul LePage, to expand virtual schools. “I have no ‘political’ staff who I can work with to move this stuff through the process,” Maine’s education commissioner had e-mailed Levesque, after meeting her at a foundation summit. Levesque replied, “Let us help.”

One entrepreneur who had seen the potential of the school-reform boom was Randy Best, a legendarily eccentric Texan with a knack for buying and selling. While a student at Lamar University, in the nineteen-sixties, Best started a class-ring and jewelry business, which he and his partners sold for twelve million dollars. That was followed by an eclectic array of ventures: art galleries, clinics, cattle yards, oil and gas, defense and aerospace, and Girl Scout-cookie manufacturing. He spent much of his wealth on a personal natural-history collection that included a seven-foot-long Egyptian sarcophagus lid, a Siberian cave-bear skeleton, and sabretoothed-tiger skulls from the Pleistocene period.

Best had perceived a vast potential market in school reform back in the mid-nineties, when George W. Bush was governor of Texas. “There’s nothing else as large in all of society. Not the military—nothing—is bigger,” Best later told *Mother Jones*. In 1995, he launched Voyager Expanded Learning, a for-profit chain of after-school tutoring programs in Dallas, and started donating money to George Bush’s 1998 reelection campaign. That year, the Governor appeared at a photo op in front of a Voyager banner, calling for twenty-five million dollars in the next

year’s budget to fund for-profit after-school programs.

Best hired early-reading experts who had worked on Bush’s reforms to transform Voyager into a phonics-based early-literacy curriculum. No Child Left Behind created a billion-dollar Reading First program, with the aim of im-



proving instruction in the early grades, and federal education officials held up Voyager as a curriculum that met the program’s standards. In Texas, legislators passed an unusual mandate that required school districts to spend twelve million dollars on Voyager. By 2005, Voyager was being used in more than a thousand districts in all fifty states.

SOLITAIRE

That summer there was no girl left in me.
It gradually became clear.
It suddenly became.

In the pool, I was more heavy than light.
Pockmarked and flabby in a floppy hat.
What will my body be

when parked all night in the earth?
Midsummer. Breathe in. Breathe out.
I am not on the oxygen tank.

Twice a week we have sex.
The lithe girls poolside I see them
at their weddings I see them with babies their hips

thickening I see them middle-aged.
I can’t see past the point where I am.
Like you, I’m just passing through.

I want to hold on awhile.
Don’t want to naught
or forsake, don’t want

to be laid gently or racked raw.
If I retinol. If I marathon.
If I Vitamin C. If I crimson

The company’s extraordinary success attracted scrutiny. A 2006 Department of Education inspector general’s audit and a 2007 report by the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee found that Reading First officials had been paid generous “consulting” fees by some of the companies whose services they were recommending, including Voyager. George Miller, the Democratic chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee, said that the situation was “very close to a criminal enterprise.” In 2007, a major comparison of reading programs conducted by the Department of Education found that Voyager had “potentially negative effects,” because students using it showed a decline in comprehension. Best says that neither he nor Voyager officials were contacted or questioned by any regulatory or investigative bodies.

By then, Best had sold Voyager to ProQuest, a Michigan company, for three hundred and sixty million dol-

my lips and streakish my hair.
If I wax. Exfoliate. Copulate
beside the fish-slicked sea.

Fill me I'm cold. Fill me I'm halfway gone.
Would you crush me in the stairwell?
Could we just lie down?

If the brakes don't work.
If the pesticides won't wash off.
If the seventh floor pushes a brick

out the window and it lands on my head.
If a tremor, menopause. Cancer. ALS.
These are the ABCs of my fear.

The doctor says
I don't have a pill for that, dear.
Well, what would be a cure-all, ladies,

gin-and-tonics on a summer night?
See you in the immortalities! O blurred.
O tumble-rush of days we cannot catch.

—Deborah Landau

lars. In 2007, he started another Dallas-based company, Higher Ed Holdings, later renamed Academic Partnerships, which persuades public colleges to attract more students by outsourcing to the firm their master's-degree programs in fields such as business and education. The company puts the courses online, recruits students from a call center in Dallas, and takes a large percentage of the tuition revenue—between fifty and seventy per cent. It has contracts with more than fifty colleges nationwide, although it hasn't been welcomed everywhere. At the University of Toledo, the education faculty blocked the contract because, as Leigh Chiarelli, then the head of the department, told me, there were serious concerns that “we'd be almost like a diploma mill.”

Best needed someone to lend credibility to the company. Florida had spent heavily on Voyager during Jeb Bush's governorship, and, in 2005, when Bush was still in office, Best spoke with

him about going into the education business. By 2011, Bush had joined Academic Partnerships as an investor and an adviser, and he became the company's highest-profile champion. Best told the *Washington Post* that Bush's annual salary was sixty thousand dollars, but he did not disclose the terms of Bush's investment stake. For the first time, Bush was making money in an educational enterprise. But Campbell, Bush's spokeswoman, is careful to draw a distinction between his work for Academic Partnerships and his education advocacy, noting that Academic Partnerships is involved in higher education, not K-12 schools.

In July, 2011, Bush sent letters to college presidents inviting them to the company's first big marketing conference, at the Four Seasons Hotel near Dallas. Speakers included Tony Blair and the former Australian Prime Minister John Howard. Last spring, Bush recorded an infomercial inviting people to attend another Dallas confer-

ence, in March. This time, the speakers were Thomas Friedman, Fareed Zakaria, and Hillary Clinton, who opened her remarks with praise for Bush's work on education. He was, she said, someone who “really focused on education during his time as governor in Florida and has continued that work with passion and dedication in the years since.”

As governor, Jeb Bush had been among those who noted one of the biggest problems with the No Child Left Behind law: standards varied greatly from state to state, depending on how ambitiously officials designed their tests and defined their success. In 2009, a coalition of governors and state education officials came together and, with financial support from the Gates Foundation and the implicit backing of the Obama Administration, devised a new set of standards intended to raise the calibre of instruction nationwide. The states broke into two consortia, each of which designed a set of tests around the new standards, called the Common Core.

The effort was bipartisan, and, at the beginning, all but four states signed on to it. Jeb Bush was not directly involved, but he was a vocal supporter of making tests and standards more consistent across the country, as part of his philosophy of full accountability for schools. The Common Core, he said, was a “clear and straightforward” path to “high, lofty standards.” In March of 2011, he appeared onstage at Miami Central High School with President Obama and Arne Duncan, who were in town to promote the Administration's policy. “Education achievement is not a Republican issue or a Democrat issue,” Bush said. “It is an issue of national priority.” Obama thanked Bush for coming to the event, adding, “We are so grateful to him for the work that he's doing on behalf of education.”

To avoid the standards being viewed as a federal mandate, the Administration had left their creation to the states. But it initially made states' acceptance of them a requirement for receiving funds under its Race to the Top initiative. Conservative activists quickly seized on the standards as another example of Obama's big-government overreach,

along the lines of the Affordable Care Act. (They referred to the standards, inevitably, as Obamacore.) The Koch brothers, the talk-radio hosts Glenn Beck and Michelle Malkin, and the Heritage Foundation joined the attack. (Bush had left the Heritage board when he ran for governor the second time, in 1998.) “The élites in the Republican Party and the Democratic Party don’t get this,” a lawyer for the American Principles Project, one of the groups leading the backlash, said.

In June, 2011, Jeb Bush and Joel Klein, newly installed at News Corp., co-wrote a *Wall Street Journal* op-ed headlined “The Case for Common Educational Standards.” A month later, an e-mail went out from the Foundation for Excellence in Education to the chiefs for change, alerting them that the upcoming convention of the con-

servative American Legislative Exchange Council, with which the foundation was usually allied, was going to take up a resolution against the Common Core. The e-mail urged the commissioners to lobby legislators attending the convention to oppose it.

The campaign against the standards particularly threatened Tony Bennett, the Indiana commissioner, a rising Republican who was one of the chiefs for change. In many states, the commissioners are appointed, but in Indiana they are elected. In 2012, the Tea Party organized opposition to Bennett’s reelection; e-mails between Bennett’s office and the foundation that summer are full of alarm about the “black helicopter crowd.” In November, Bennett lost to an anti-Common Core Democrat who had Tea Party backing. Several potential Republican Presidential

candidates for 2016—including the governors Scott Walker, of Wisconsin, Bobby Jindal, of Louisiana, and Mike Pence, of Indiana, all of whom had supported the Common Core—backed away from the standards, as did Florida’s governor, Rick Scott. Last April, Bush told Fox News, “Others that supported the standard all of a sudden now are opposed to it. I don’t get it.”

Meanwhile, several of the chiefs for change whom Bush was relying on to promote the standards were leaving office. Early last year, New Jersey’s Chris Cerf took an executive position at Amplify, which in 2013 had won a \$12.5-million contract to develop a digital library of student-assessment tools from one of the state consortia that were developing the Common Core-based tests. Such movement from the public sector to the private is routine, but it underscored a central critique of the standards from both the left and the right: that, because the new testing regime required states to buy new test-prep materials, curricula, and even computers on which to take the tests, they were essentially another sales opportunity for the education industry. A headline on the Web site of the libertarian magazine *Reason* in July claimed that “Common Core Is Crony Capitalism for Computer Companies.”

A decade and a half earlier, Bush had been in the vanguard on conservative school reform. But, last September, he was not invited to the Values Voter Summit, the big annual event in Washington, D.C., for Republican politicians seeking to build support among religious-right activists. Tony Perkins, the president of the Family Research Council, which hosts the summit, explained at a news conference that “Jeb is a very nice guy, but he has a challenge among real conservatives for aggressively pushing for Common Core.” He added, “That’s a huge problem.”

Since Bush left the statehouse, the for-profit charter-school industry in Florida has continued to grow; the two largest chains have doubled their enrollment, to more than fifty thousand students. For-profit charters now spend half a million dollars a year on lobbying, and they contribute heavily to political campaigns. Charter Schools



“This counts as one wish, by the way.”

USA alone gave more than two hundred thousand dollars to candidates for state office in the 2012 elections. The industry so dominates the field, particularly in the Miami and Fort Lauderdale areas, that it has discouraged the expansion in Florida of highly regarded not-for-profit networks, such as KIPP and Green Dot. But questions about for-profit operations continue to mount.

The U.S. Department of Education is auditing the practices of charter companies, including those of Florida's largest for-profit provider, Academica. The company, which was founded in 1999 by two brothers, Fernando and Ignacio Zulueta, has nearly a hundred charter and virtual schools in the state. The Miami *Herald* reported last April that the audit is examining the company's practice of leasing space from development firms controlled by the Zuluetas. A 2006 Miami-Dade County audit determined that this arrangement, at one cluster of Academica schools, had cost taxpayers \$1.3 million. (A company spokeswoman says that its leasing practices are proper.)

Academica recently hired the Florida state senator Anitere Flores, who served as an education adviser in Bush's administration, and Manny Diaz, Jr., a state legislator, to administer Doral College, a new for-profit operation. It offers college-level classes to students at the company's Doral Academy, a charter high school tucked incongruously in a warehouse district just west of the Miami airport.

Nearby, Armando Codina (with whom Bush has not worked since he first entered office) is building an eight-hundred-student charter school next to a hundred-and-twenty-acre luxury-condo development in the freshly minted "downtown" of Doral. The building will be financed and controlled by a Codina-affiliated nonprofit but managed by the local school board. An official at Doral town offices, however, could not provide any information about the school being built across the street. Any interested parents would need to "research it with Codina Partners," he said.

Bob Graham, a former Democratic governor and U.S. senator from Florida, laments Bush's legacy of privatized education. "I wish this experiment were

taking place somewhere other than Florida," he told me. Alex Villalobos, a former Republican state-senate majority leader who sparred with Bush over vouchers, shared that sentiment: "If the issue is you have failing public schools, then how is taking more money away from public education and giving it to private entities that are not accountable going to help public schools?"

The Liberty City Charter School closed in 2008, after a costly legal dispute with its landlord. But T. Willard Fair, the co-founder, told me that he still believed in the changes that the school had helped spark, including the for-profit charters. "This whole hue and cry about 'for profit' is hogwash," he said. "We're talking about competition."

In late November, Bush went to Washington for the annual Foundation for Excellence in Education summit, held at the Marriott Wardman Park hotel. He reiterated his support for the Common Core and school choice in a speech that was full of education bromides ("poverty is not an excuse"; "states and local communities are where the best ideas come from"). It was hard to question the conviction underlying his remarks, but his delivery was phlegmatic. Todd Lamb, a former education adviser to President George W. Bush who now works for Engrade, the digital-learning division of McGraw-Hill, said that if Jeb "had grown up in, say, rural Northern California, he would've become a chief academic officer for a school district."

In the corridors, hundreds of state legislators, education commissioners, activists, and Bush aides mingled with education-industry executives and lobbyists. Campbell Brown, the former CNN anchor, who is now an anti-teachers'-union activist, walked through the hall with a cup of coffee in each hand. Joel Klein was there to pitch Amplify's latest products, including a tablet app that features the actor Chadwick Boseman reading from the autobiography of Frederick Douglass. The "donor meetings" between the state

commissioners and company executives were held all afternoon in a conference room.

Later, attendees drifted to the hotel bar, where they waited to hear Condoleezza Rice speak at a banquet that evening. Tony Bennett walked through the lobby. After he lost his bid for reelection in Indiana, he briefly served as Florida's

education commissioner, but resigned after the Associated Press reported that he had tweaked the rating of an Indiana charter school founded by a major G.O.P. donor. (An inspector general later cleared him of any legal violation.) He was consulting for the test-prep company ACT Aspire, which is co-owned by Pearson. "In this incredible land of

opportunity," Bennett said, "why shouldn't someone who served his country get to serve in another way?"

Less than a month later, Bush announced his possible Presidential candidacy. In the weeks since, he stepped down from his position at the foundation, and he has been extricating himself from his business ties. He quit his advisory post at Barclays (which acquired Lehman Brothers); left the boards of Tenet Health Care and Rayonier, a real-estate and timber company; and resigned from Academic Partnerships.

He is, for now, maintaining his position at his consulting firm, Jeb Bush & Associates, and at three private-equity funds that he has helped assemble during the past two years. According to Bloomberg Politics, the funds have together raised a hundred and twenty-seven million dollars, much of it from a Chinese conglomerate, called HNA, to invest in oil and gas ventures and in the aviation industry. "I'm not ashamed" of those ties, Bush told a reporter for a Miami TV station in December, about his former business affiliations. "Taking risk and creating jobs is something we ought to have more of."

Al Cardenas told me that Bush's decision to walk away from his business interests suggested that he had heard the call of duty. "It's not easy," Cardenas said, but "there are lots of things you do for your country—and this is one of them." ♦



THE WHOLE HAYSTACK

The N.S.A. claims it needs access to all our phone records. But is that the best way to catch a terrorist?

BY MATTATHIAS SCHWARTZ

Almost every major terrorist attack on Western soil in the past fifteen years has been committed by people who were already known to law enforcement. One of the gunmen in the attack on *Charlie Hebdo*, in Paris, had been sent to prison for recruiting jihadist fighters. The other had reportedly studied in Yemen with Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, the underwear bomber, who was arrested and interrogated by the F.B.I. in 2009. The leader of the 7/7 London suicide bombings, in 2005, had been observed by British intelligence meeting with a suspected terrorist, though MI5 later said that the bombers were “not on our radar.” The men who planned the Mumbai attacks, in 2008, were under electronic surveillance by the United States, the United Kingdom, and India, and one had been an informant for the Drug Enforcement Administration. One of the brothers accused of bombing the Boston Marathon was the subject of an F.B.I. threat assessment and a warning from Russian intelligence.

In each of these cases, the authorities were not wanting for data. What they failed to do was appreciate the significance of the data they already had. Nevertheless, since 9/11, the National Security Agency has sought to acquire every possible scrap of digital information—what General Keith Alexander, the agency’s former head, has called “the whole haystack.” The size of the haystack was revealed in June, 2013, by Edward Snowden. The N.S.A. vacuums up Internet searches, social-media content, and, most controversially, the records (known as metadata) of United States phone calls—who called whom, for how long, and from where. The agency stores the metadata for five years, possibly longer.

The metadata program remains the point of greatest apparent friction between the N.S.A. and the Constitu-

tion. It is carried out under Section 215 of the Patriot Act, which allows the government to collect “books, records, papers, documents, and other items” that are “relevant” to “an authorized investigation.” While debating the Patriot Act in 2001, Senator Russ Feingold worried about the government’s powers to collect “the personal records of anyone—perhaps someone who worked with, or lived next door to . . . the target of the investigation.” Snowden revealed that the N.S.A. goes much further. Metadata for every domestic phone call from Verizon and other carriers, hundreds of billions of records in all, are considered “relevant” under Section 215. The N.S.A. collects them on an “ongoing, daily basis.”

The N.S.A. asserts that it uses the metadata to learn whether anyone inside the U.S. is in contact with high-priority terrorism suspects, colloquially referred to as “known bad guys.” Michael Hayden, the former C.I.A. and N.S.A. director, has said, “We kill people based on metadata.” He then added, “But that’s not what we do with *this* metadata,” referring to Section 215.

Soon after Snowden’s revelations, Alexander said that the N.S.A.’s surveillance programs have stopped “fifty-four different terrorist-related activities.” Most of these were “terrorist plots.” Thirteen involved the United States. Credit for foiling these plots, he continued, was partly due to the metadata program, intended to “find the terrorist that walks among us.”

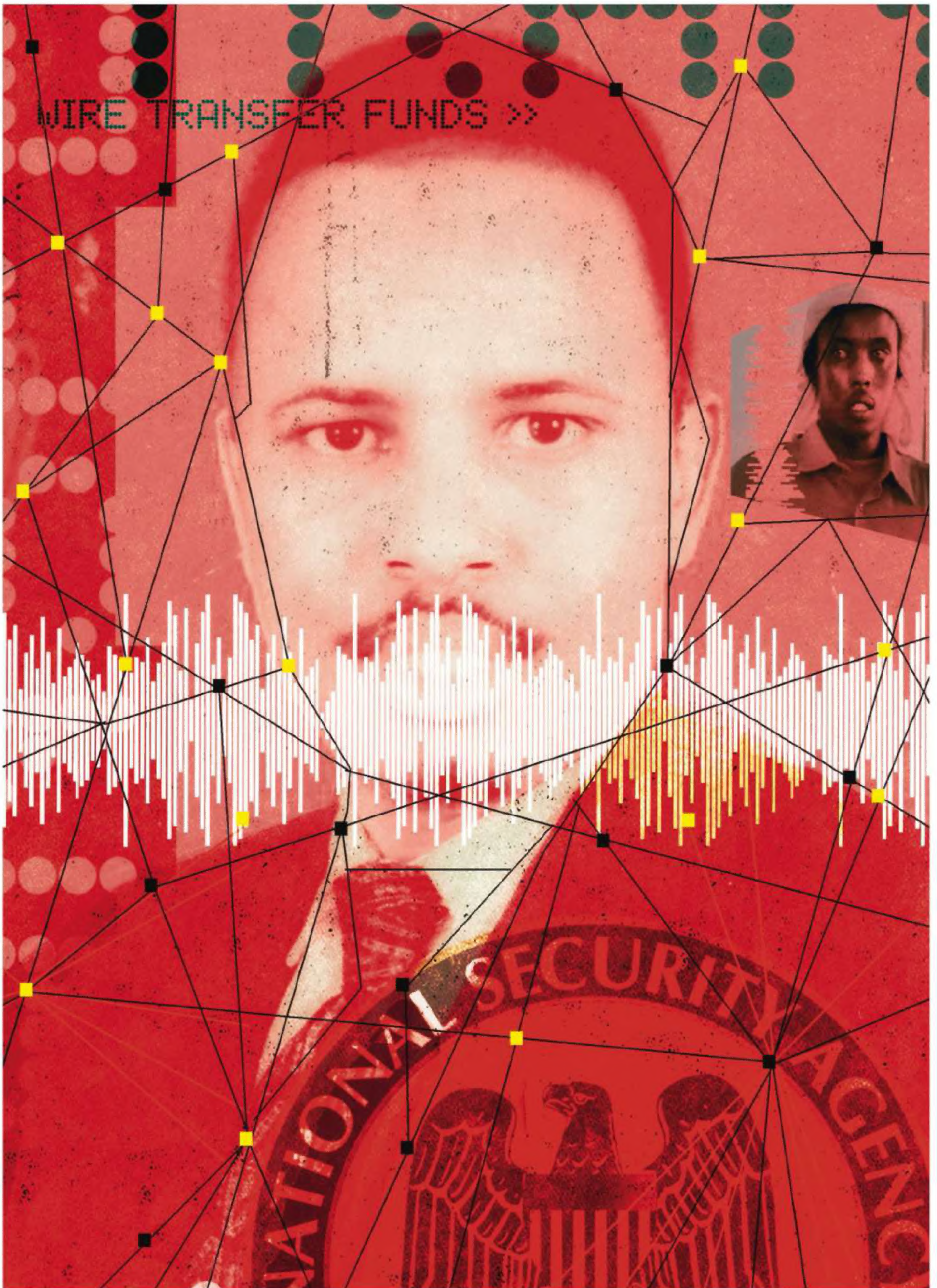
President Obama also quantified the benefits of the metadata program. That June, in a press conference with Angela Merkel, the German Chancellor, Obama said, “We know of at least fifty threats that have been averted because of this information.” He continued, “Lives have been saved.”

Section 215 is just one of many legal authorities that govern U.S. spy pro-

grams. These authorities are jumbled together in a way that makes it difficult to separate their individual efficacy. Early in the metadata debate, the fifty-four cases were sometimes attributed to Section 215, and sometimes to other sections of other laws. At a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing in October, 2013, Senator Patrick Leahy, of Vermont, called the fifty-four-plots statistic “plainly wrong . . . these weren’t all plots, and they weren’t all thwarted.” He cited a statement by Alexander’s deputy that “there’s only really one example of a case where, but for the use of Section 215 bulk phone-records collection, terrorist activity was stopped.” “He’s right,” Alexander said.

The case was that of Basaaly Moalin, a Somali-born U.S. citizen living in San Diego. In July, 2013, Sean Joyce, the F.B.I.’s deputy director at the time, said in Senate-committee testimony that Moalin’s phone number had been in contact with an “Al Qaeda East Africa member” in Somalia. The N.S.A., Joyce said, was able to make this connection and notify the F.B.I. thanks to Section 215. That February, Moalin was found guilty of sending eighty-five hundred dollars to the Shabaab, an extremist Somali militia with ties to Al Qaeda. “Moalin and three other individuals have been convicted,” Joyce continued. “I go back to what we need to remember, what happened in 9/11.” At the same hearing, Senator Dianne Feinstein, of California, talked about “how little information we had” before 9/11. “I support this program,” she said, referring to Section 215. “They will come after us, and I think we need to prevent an attack wherever we can.”

In the thirteen years that have passed since 9/11, the N.S.A. has used Section 215 of the Patriot Act to take in records from hundreds of billions of domestic phone calls. Congress was



Basaaly Moalin was convicted of financing Somali extremists, in the only case where the N.S.A.'s phone-records program was decisive.

explicit about why it passed the Patriot Act—despite concerns about potential effects on civil liberties, it believed that the law was necessary to prevent another attack on the scale of 9/11. The government has not shown any instance besides Moalin's in which the law's metadata provision has directly led to a conviction in a terrorism case. Is it worth it?

Before 9/11, the intelligence community was already struggling to evolve. The technology of surveillance was changing, from satellites to fibre-optic cable. The targets were also changing, from the embassies and nuclear arsenals of the Cold War era to scattered networks of violent extremists. The law still drew lines between foreign and domestic surveillance, but the increasingly global nature of communications was complicating this distinction.

In Washington, many people blamed 9/11 on a “wall” between intelligence gathering and criminal investigations. In a report on pre-9/11 failures, the Department of Justice criticized the F.B.I.'s San Diego field office for not making counterterrorism a higher priority. Two of the hijackers—Nawaf al-Hazmi and Khalid al-Mihdhar—took flying lessons in San Diego and attended a mosque where the imam, Anwar al-Awlaki, had been the target of an F.B.I. investigation. They lived for a time in an apartment that they

rented from an F.B.I. informant, and Mihdhar made phone calls to a known Al Qaeda safe house in Yemen. But the F.B.I. wasn't solely at fault. The C.I.A. knew that Mihdhar had a visa to travel to the U.S., and that Hazmi had arrived in Los Angeles in January, 2000. The agency failed to forward this information to the F.B.I.

Three years after 9/11, the size of San Diego's Joint Terrorism Task Force had tripled. In California, hundreds of local police became “terrorism liaison officers,” trained to observe anomalous activity that could presage an attack. The San Diego “fusion center” spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on computers and monitors, including fifty-five flat-screen televisions, which officials said were for “watching the news.” This was one of seventy-seven such centers nationwide, at a cost of several hundred million dollars. The F.B.I. office established a “field-intelligence group,” a special unit that gathered information about domestic terrorism threats.

Of particular interest was San Diego's growing Somali population. The first Somalis came to San Diego in the late nineteen-eighties and settled in City Heights, a crime-ridden neighborhood of bungalows and strip malls half an hour east of downtown. Cheap housing and nearby social services had attracted immigrants fleeing Vietnam, Cambodia, Honduras, Guatemala, Serbia, Iraq, and Sudan. Most of the So-

malis lived with members of their extended families and spoke little English. Many settled in an apartment complex at 3810 Winona Avenue: five gray two-story buildings, at the bottom of a hill beside a dusty ravine, known to the residents as the *godka*, the Somali word for cave. So many Somalis settled there that the owners changed the name of the complex from Winona Gardens to the Bandar Salaam Apartments.

After the Somali government collapsed, in 1991, the community, which now numbered more than a thousand, spread up Winona toward University Avenue. In 2000, a group of Somalis borrowed half a million dollars to buy an old church at Winona and University and converted it into a mosque, the Masjid Al Ansar. They hired an imam, Mohamed Mohamed Mohamud, also known as Mohamed Khadar, who had spent years studying the Koran in Islamabad, Pakistan. Khadar was a charismatic speaker and one of the leaders of a national council of Somali-American imams. Within two years, he had raised enough money to pay off the mosque's mortgage. According to one of Khadar's attorneys, the F.B.I. approached him multiple times. “I think they came to his house and to the mosque,” the attorney told me. “He exercised his right not to talk.” A law-enforcement official familiar with the Masjid Al Ansar told me that a paid informant had said that some of the mosque's worshippers were recruiting jihadist fighters. This lead “correlated with other information, especially historically, when you look at Anwar al-Awlaki,” the official said. (“I've never heard this and it's not true,” Bashir Hassan, the president of the mosque's board, said.)

The Somalis were slow to trust people from other clans, let alone F.B.I. agents. Nonetheless, San Diego law enforcement did what it could to keep an eye on the Somalis and on the broader Muslim community. A recent document obtained by the A.C.L.U. shows that the Joint Terrorism Task Force kept a list of forty-two “Somali community leaders.” An F.B.I. document shows that the agency sent an informant to report back on “private conversations” and “areas of concern” at a banquet held at a Holiday Inn by



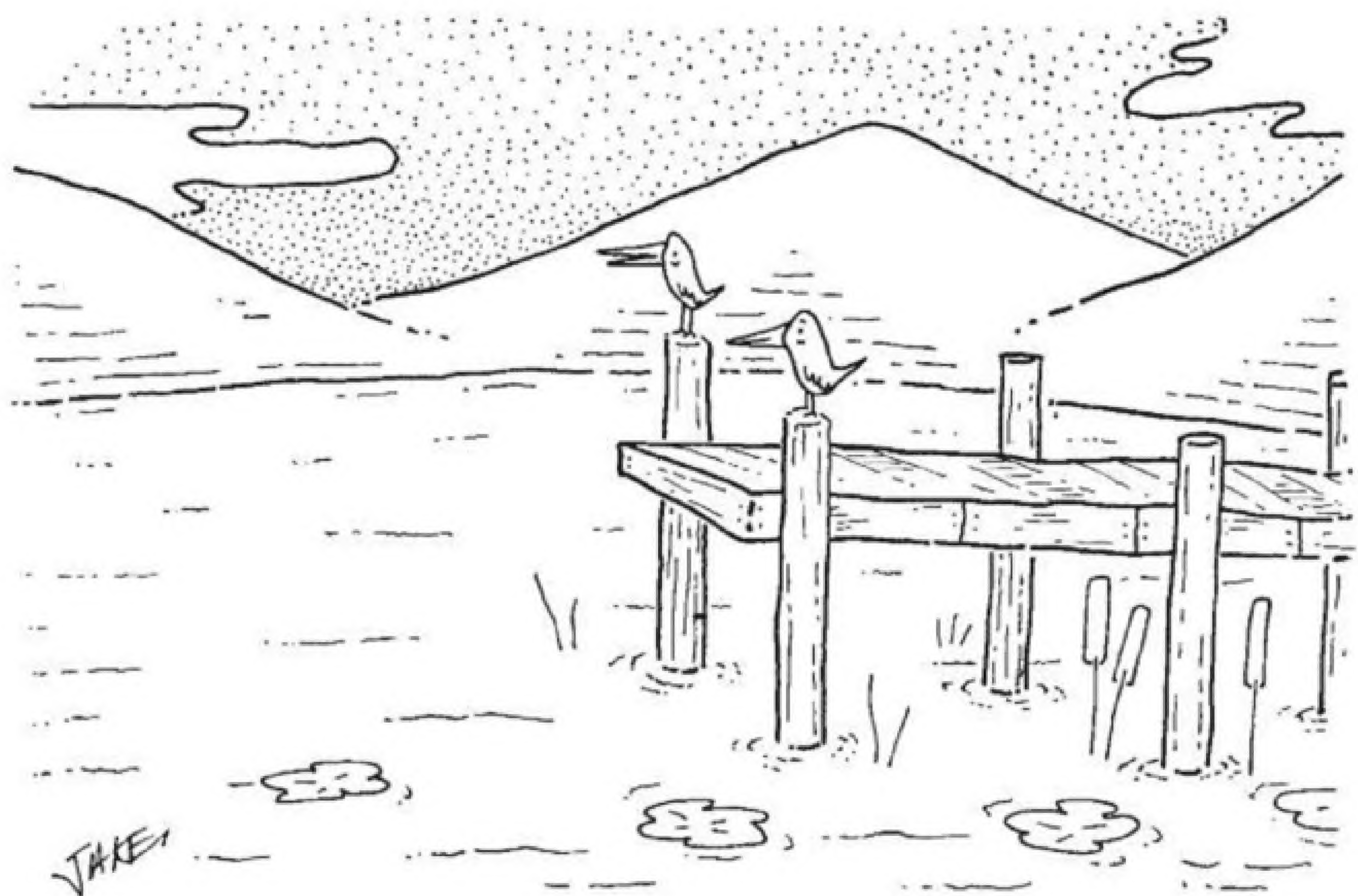
“You've got one of my dresses on again.”

San Diego's chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations. The Joint Terrorism Task Force made twenty-one arrests in San Diego County in the three years after 9/11, which led to several deportations and seven prosecutions for offenses related to terrorism. One of these defendants was Somali; all came from predominantly Muslim countries.

Among the regular worshippers at the Masjid Al Ansar was Basaaly Moalin. Like Mihdhar and Hazmi, he was a recent immigrant whose social life revolved around the mosque. Unlike them, he had put down roots in San Diego. He had arrived in 1996 with his brother, Warsame. His mother soon followed. In 2000, Moalin made one of his periodic trips back to Somalia and married a woman named Maryan, a friend of his family; he had known her since elementary school. He visited Maryan and their five children once or twice a year. Sometimes she needled him about their different circumstances. "I am not like you, who ran away from here," she once told him.

Moalin was born Muse Shekhnor Roble, the sixth of seven children, in 1977, near Guriceel, a country town in central Somalia. His father herded livestock for a living, but had enough money to support three wives. When Moalin was a teen-ager, his family moved to Mogadishu. In 1991, the longtime dictator Siad Barre lost control of the capital, setting off Somalia's ongoing civil war. During the fighting, a mortar shell struck Moalin's home. A soldier found him lying on the ground and shot him several times, disfiguring his arm. A neighbor carried him, unconscious, to a hospital. It took three months for the news to reach his family that he was still alive. He spent four years in refugee camps in Somalia and Kenya before the U.S. granted him asylum and, eventually, citizenship.

Upon arriving in the U.S., he changed his last name to Moalin, a Somali honorific meaning "teacher" or "scholar." Though he had no college degree and was not especially learned about Islam, he liked to talk. He considered himself an authority on matters ranging from politics to health to the best way to cook spaghetti. One San Diego acquaintance called him a



"Sometimes I think, Why king fishing? Who says I can't sandpipe or woodpeck or warble?"

"very smart guy," and recalled Moalin's desire to become an electrician. He took vocational classes and found work as a technician at a telecommunications company, but his frequent trips to Somalia made it difficult for him to advance. By 2005, he was driving a taxi, trading shifts with Warsame. Among the drivers, Moalin was "an unofficial leader," another acquaintance said, "a trustworthy individual. He'd come and collect money for a cause."

As the civil war in Somalia got worse, warlords, some backed by the C.I.A., fought with Islamists for control of Mogadishu. Moalin's home town, Guriceel, mustered a local militia, which was funded largely by donations from abroad. Moalin became one of the main conduits of money flowing from the U.S. to his home region. He paid for food, housing, and tuition for two orphanages, according to documents obtained by his defense. The region was going through a major drought, and some of the money that Moalin collected went to a committee that trucked water to dry areas. Another part of his earnings went to the construction of a house in Guriceel. He planned to live there with his family one day, a respected and influential man who had stood by his country during its most

troubled years. In San Diego, he carried himself as though already living in this future. He dressed like a businessman and worked out regularly at 24 Hour Fitness.

In 2013, foreign remittances to Somalia reached \$1.3 billion, which accounts for roughly half of the country's G.D.P. Most of this money moves through *hawalas*, informal networks of Islamic money-transfer agents. Some U.S. *hawalas* are underground; some are affiliated with licensed banks. It's difficult for authorities to track which *hawala* transfers buy food and other necessities in Somalia and which might be support for militant groups. But most agree that the current system is preferable to Somali émigrés' making periodic trips with bundles of cash. "Somehow the money's going to move," Carol Beaumier, a former federal bank examiner, said in a recent interview with *American Banker*.

Moalin was a regular customer at the Shidaal Express, a licensed *hawala* in City Heights, where he knew one of the employees, Issa Doreh, a college-educated man in his late fifties with a lanky build and a graying beard. Well known in the community, Doreh helped found a charity that gave indigent Somalis a traditional Muslim burial. He



"Time's up. Crayons down."

ministered to Muslim prisoners and was an informal mentor to young men at the mosque. "He'd say, 'You should be careful and take advantage of your time,'" a young Somali man told me. Most first-generation Somali families steer women toward domestic roles, but Doreh's eldest daughter was studying for a graduate degree in psychology. He had been planning to open a barber-shop, he told me, when the owner of the Shidaal Express, impressed by his strong community ties, recruited him to work as a clerk.

Like Moalin, Doreh worshipped at the Al Ansar mosque. They both lived at 3810 Winona, Doreh with his wife and children and Moalin with a roommate, another working-class Somali. When Moalin sent a money transfer to Somalia, he often phoned Doreh to check on its status. Moalin called Doreh "Sheikh Issa" and sometimes bragged about their relationship.

The F.B.I.'s earliest known contact with Moalin was in 2003. Sean Joyce, the bureau's former deputy director, has said that it was "based on a tip. We investigated that tip. We found no nexus to terrorism and closed the case."

Beginning in 2006, many Somali-Americans found their loyalties divided between their old homeland and their new one. A group called the Islamic Courts Union had captured the southern half of Somalia, and pushed the U.S.-backed Transitional Federal Government out of Mogadishu. They imposed a sometimes harsh form of

Sharia, and reopened the Mogadishu seaport and airport, which had mostly been closed for fifteen years. Within the Courts coalition was a militant wing, known as the Shabaab, or "youth." Among the Shabaab were hardened jihadists who had fought in Afghanistan and conspired with Al Qaeda to commit the 1998 Embassy bombings in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi. Yet some Western diplomats, including voices within the State Department, argued in favor of negotiating with the Courts. To the Pentagon, however, the stability that came with the Courts regime seems to have been outweighed by the likelihood that radical jihadists in their ranks could give Al Qaeda a foothold in East Africa.

In late December, 2006, thousands of Ethiopian troops invaded Somalia, with the U.S. providing intelligence support. The Ethiopians sought to defeat the Courts, reclaim territory lost to Somalia during the Cold War, and restore the Transitional Federal Government to power.

The invasion made Guriceel, Basaaly Moalin's home town, into a battleground. The Ethiopians "threw the fire everywhere," one witness said. "Innocent people were dying—women and children, elderly people." She continued, "Everyone took their gun and they fought." According to Mohamud Uluso, a leader from Moalin's clan, there were reports of the Ethiopians torturing and killing five of Moalin's family members.

From Guriceel, the Ethiopians moved east to capture Mogadishu. Most

of the Courts' leadership fled to Eritrea. The Shabaab stayed behind to mount an insurgency. In the U.S., Somali immigrants gathered in front of the White House to protest the Ethiopian invasion. "The perception was that Ethiopia was colonizing the country," Ahmed Sahid, who runs Somali Family Service, a nonprofit in San Diego, told me. "All kinds of groups were popping up." "It was hard to call them bad guys," Abdi Mohamoud, the director of the San Diego nonprofit Horn of Africa, said, speaking of the Courts at the time of the 2006 invasion. At that time, "all they were doing was fighting the Ethiopians. People didn't see any danger in that."

Among the Shabaab's top commanders was Aden Hashi Ayro. He often changed his phone number and used code names. He was believed to be in his thirties, and was one of the youngest Somali guerrillas to have trained with the Taliban in Afghanistan, where some sources allege that he met Osama bin Laden prior to the 9/11 attacks. Ayro's skill as a fighter made him a hero among Islamist hard-liners and a major target of the United States. David Shinn, who served as the U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia under President Clinton, has written that the Shabaab, under Ayro's leadership, "provided protection for three Al Qaeda operatives sought by the U.S."

Like Moalin, Ayro grew up near Guriceel, which by late 2007 was under the control of a local clan militia. Though Ayro's Shabaab forces had fought alongside Guriceel's militia against the Ethiopians, the locals did not accept the Shabaab as their leaders and forced them to make their camp outside the town. Ayro was running out of money for food and ammunition. His profile made it difficult for him to receive patronage from overseas. "We were already in high gear cracking down on terrorist financing," a senior U.S. diplomat working in the region at that time said. "We certainly were making efforts to restrict the flow of funds." It appears that these efforts were successful, and that, in response, Ayro got in touch with Basaaly Moalin.

The U.S. had been tracking Ayro

for some time, even launching an air strike against him in early 2007. Using Section 215, the N.S.A. told the F.B.I. that a phone number associated with Al Qaeda (apparently Ayro's) was in what Joyce, the F.B.I.'s former deputy director, has called "indirect" contact with a San Diego phone number. (In 2012, the N.S.A. "tipped" fewer than five hundred numbers to the F.B.I., according to testimony from John Inglis, the agency's former deputy director.) The F.B.I. determined that the phone belonged to Moalin. It then obtained warrants to tap his phone calls and intercept his e-mail.

By December, 2007, the F.B.I. wiretaps showed that Moalin was in regular contact with a man they believed to be Ayro. The government's transcripts give the caller's name as Shikhalow, or "slim limbs." Early in 2008, an F.B.I. linguist wrote an e-mail saying that he'd heard "Shiqalaw might be an aka for Eyrow. Please advise if that's true." "That is correct," the F.B.I.'s lead agent replied. "It is a slurred together version of Sheikh Ayrow."

SHIKHALOW: We need the sum of two thousand. No, three thousand one hundred and sixty; and it's needed for Bay and Bakool, as their rations for these ten days.

BASAALY: Okay.

SHIKHALOW: And as of today, we don't have a penny for them.

BASAALY: Okay.

SHIKHALOW: By any means, get me an immediate answer about that . . . today.

BASAALY: Leave that matter to me, if God wills.

The U.S. continued to watch Ayro closely. "We just heard from another agency that Ayrow tried to make a call to Basaaly," an internal e-mail from the F.B.I. sent during the Moalin investigation reads. "If you see anything today, can you give us a shout? We're extremely interested in getting real-time info (location/new #s) on Ayrow."

On the phone, Moalin is eager to hear news from the front. He calls the Ethiopians "filthy ones" and "lice-infested." Talking with another taxi-driver, he says that he was "pleased" to hear a bomb explode in Mogadishu while he was on the phone with his wife. He laughs about "the damage inflicted to those men," apparently Burundian soldiers working with the U.N., which was conducting relief missions in Somalia.

Shortly after eleven o'clock on the night of December 20, 2007, Doreh's phone rang. It was Moalin, looking for help with his fund-raising. He wanted to schedule a phone call with the imam, Mohamed Khadar, but Khadar "doesn't have a phone number."

Doreh seemed tired. Reading the transcript, it's unclear whether he intended to comply with Moalin's instructions or if he merely wanted to get off the phone and back into bed: "Yes . . . okay . . . yes . . . uh-huh . . . we will do our best . . . okay, God willing." Moalin did not send any money through the Shidaal Express for a week. Then he called Doreh again to prod him. "He doesn't have a telephone," Moalin complained, of Khadar. "I did not reach him by phone and I didn't go to the mosque at noon today."

Moalin wanted Doreh to find Khadar "this afternoon at the mosque" and ask for money "for the men." "God willing I'll tell him if I see him," Doreh said. It was shortly after four o'clock. By that evening, Moalin had found Khadar's phone number and was calling him directly. Moalin and Khadar engage in some small talk, but do not mention Doreh. "I will complete the task, which pertains to the men, tomorrow, God willing," Khadar says.

To the F.B.I. agents listening in at the time, these calls likely had echoes of the Mihdhar case from 9/11: an apparent link between a wanted terrorist and an obscure apartment, talk of bombings and suicide attacks conducted



in a foreign language, connections to a money-transfer agency and a mosque.

Two of Moalin's cousins told me that not all of Moalin's talk should be taken literally, as he often engaged in *fadhi ku dirir*, literally "sitting and fighting," the no-holds-barred bull sessions common among Somali men. But the F.B.I. took Moalin's words seriously. At one point, an agency linguist fluent in Somali wrote an official assessment of Moalin's motives. "He tends to ex-

aggerate," the linguist wrote. "He tries to outshine others in supporting home region." The F.B.I.'s Field Intelligence Group later wrote that although Moalin was "the most significant al-Shabaab fundraiser in the San Diego area," he was "not ideologically driven to support al-Shabaab." Rather, his support for Ayro was a function of "tribal affiliation." At one point, Moalin appeared to offer Shikhalow the use of his house in Mogadishu as a base of operations.

The Shabaab's methods angered many Somalis. On January 15th, Moalin received a call from a friend named Abdulkadir, who warned him to be careful about whom he was sending money to:

ABDULKADIR: If today these men's actions are what I have seen, they became terrorist actions.

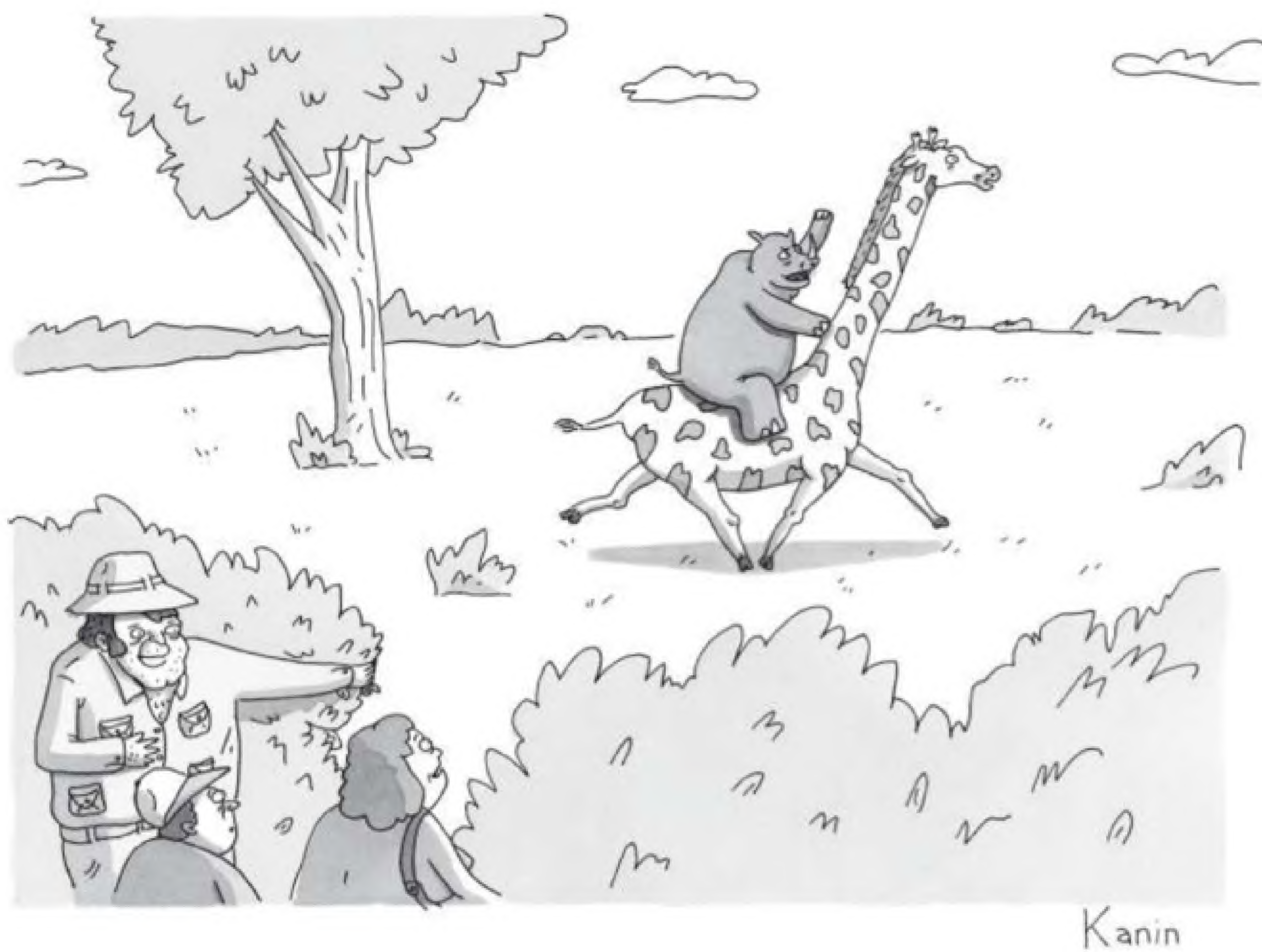
BASAALY: Yes. . . .

ABDULKADIR: The capital which you are supporting them with will take you to heaven, or are you asking to go to hell?

BASAALY: Well, that has its problems, but Abdulkadir, let's look at it from another angle. They are the ones who are firing the most bullets at the enemy.

Less than a month later, Moalin went to the Shidaal Express and sent two thousand dollars to a contact in Dhusa Mareb, the provincial capital and one of Ayro's main outposts. The money was sent under the name Dhunkaal Warfaa. "Did you receive Dhunkaal's stuff?" Moalin asked Shikhalow the day after the money was sent.

Moalin called Doreh periodically to check on the status of individual payments. When he called the imam, Mohamed Khadar, Khadar often seemed eager to get Moalin off the phone. Moalin wanted to give Shikhalow a regular stipend; Khadar didn't want to promise. At one point, Moalin told Khadar to hold back twenty or thirty people "that you trust" after Friday services at the mosque, and ask them for money to give Shikhalow. Khadar is noncommittal. "God willing, it will be all right," he says. "Don't worry." Other times, Khadar criticizes the Shabaab. "They slaughter anyone they capture and that is not good policy to begin with," he tells Moalin. Khadar tells Moalin to pursue "unity" and "coöperation" among differing



“And that’s why you go on safari.”

Kanin

groups in the area around Guriceel. “We need to have conditions tied to the support,” one of Moalin’s Guriceel contacts says a few days later. “We need to tell them that we are going to support you but we need a unity.” Moalin appears to agree. “They promise they will not fight with people ... because they need fund[s] from us,” he says.

Ulus, the clan leader, told me that negotiating with an armed militia from thousands of miles away was a complicated and sometimes frightening business for the diaspora, especially those whose family members still lived in militia-controlled areas. “It’s not that you like or support a certain group,” he said. “You are living in a situation where you don’t have the power to defend yourself.”

In March, 2008, the State Department announced that it had added the Shabaab to its list of foreign terrorist organizations. On the phone, Moalin attributed this action to “the American spy agency.” In April, the drought around Guriceel ended. “All the water tanks are full,” Shikhalow told Moalin. “Now it is the time to finance the jihad.”

Moalin’s answer is ambiguous. “Yes, we humans cannot feed everyone,” he says. “Only God can, you know?” Eleven

days later, on April 23rd, he sent another nineteen hundred dollars to Dhusa Mareb.

On May 1st, a Navy ship off the Somali coast fired four Tomahawk missiles that struck a house in Dhusa Mareb, not far from where Moalin was born. A local headmaster counted sixteen corpses scattered around the crater, according to the *Washington Post*. That day, a Shabaab spokesman announced that “infidel planes” had killed Ayro. Hours after the attack, Moalin called a fund-raising contact in St. Louis who told him about “a rumor that birds targeted the house where Shikhalow, ‘small legs,’ used to stay one hour ago.” Later that evening, he shared the news with Doreh. “That man is gone,” he said. “That news is highly reliable.” Moalin received no more phone calls from Shikhalow. (Moalin’s attorney maintains that the F.B.I. was wrong about the identity of Shikhalow, and that Moalin and Ayro were never in contact.)

The F.B.I. was concerned about what Moalin might do in the immediate aftermath of Ayro’s death. Many in the intelligence community believed that Al Qaeda was expanding its focus from 9/11-style operations to include attacks on

“soft targets,” like those which later took place in Mumbai and like the Shabaab’s own assault on the Westgate Mall in Nairobi. “We are keeping our ‘ears’ open for any intelligence of importance,” the F.B.I.’s Somali linguist wrote, in an e-mail to Special Agent Michael Kaiser. “Please let me know if you believe that Basaaly might be thinking about revenge here in the U.S.,” Kaiser responded. “We want to be on the safe side.”

In another e-mail, Kaiser raised the possibility that Moalin might try to replace Ayro among the Shabaab’s leadership. In addition to monitoring his phones, the F.B.I. conducted physical surveillance of Moalin. Over the summer, Moalin started to notice. “We are closely watched,” he said. Apparently referring to another money transfer, he added, “The task we were involved in a few days ago was—it was reported to them.” An associate, he said, was “visited by the men.” (In response to written questions submitted through his lawyer, Moalin later denied that he was aware of any specific surveillance.)

Up until August, 2008, Moalin expressed sympathy for the Shabaab, calling Mukhtar Robow, the group’s spokesman, his “boss.” (According to the defense’s translation, Moalin called Robow “my man.”) Moalin’s St. Louis contact, Mohamud Abdi Yusuf, who was later convicted of material support, considered Moalin to be dangerously indiscreet. “You are not accountable with anything,” he said. “You don’t even know where you are; you talk as you wish, you don’t know what you should hide and what you should not.”

During the course of 2008, the Shabaab’s influence in Somalia grew stronger and its ideology more extreme. Its forces consolidated territory in the southern part of the country, sponsored pirates, used floggings and stonings to enforce their version of Sharia law, and undertook spectacular suicide attacks. Its leaders banned the Somali flag and declared support for Osama bin Laden. In a private letter, bin Laden rebuffed a Shabaab request for a formal alliance, lest “the enemies escalate their anger and mobilize against you.”

Whatever credibility the Shabaab had among mainstream U.S. Somalis evaporated in late 2009, when a suicide bomber killed twenty-five people during

a university commencement ceremony in Mogadishu. The elders of San Diego's Somali community held a meeting to condemn the attacks. Issa Doreh was among them. "Suicide martyrdom is not martyrdom," Khadar, the imam, said, according to a participant. "All Muslim scholars prohibited this action."

The young Somali man in San Diego told me that he had once considered joining the fight against the Ethiopians. "I came to Issa Doreh and said I wanted to help," he said. "He told me, 'Don't go fight. Study. Fix yourself.'"

The F.B.I. arrested Moalin on the morning of October 31, 2010, at San Diego International Airport, as he was preparing to fly to Somalia. His last allegedly criminal transfer to Somalia was two thousand dollars, sent more than two years earlier to Omer Mataan, a man who was apparently a Somali militant. (It is unclear whether he was affiliated with the Shabaab.) Across town, at a Department of Homeland Security office in Chula Vista, Mohamed Khadar arrived with his lawyer at what he thought was an interview about a green card. Once he was inside, a group of F.B.I. agents appeared and put him in handcuffs. Doreh was arrested early the next morning, at his home in the Bandar Salaam Apartments, as he was preparing to drive his children to school. The three men and another cabdriver were charged with a variety of crimes, including conspiracy and providing material support for terrorism, a crime that was created in the mid-nineteen-nineties, and whose definition was broadened in 1996 and again with the Patriot Act. Prosecutors used the material-support charge fewer than ten times before 9/11, and have used it successfully more than a hundred and sixty times since, according to Human Rights Watch.

In City Heights, the reaction was shock. Doreh and Khadar were men of high standing who had publicly condemned the Shabaab. "The community knew these people," Hassan, the president of the mosque's board, told me. "They don't believe, even up to now."

Two years passed before the trial began, in January, 2013. On the first day, the courtroom was filled with the defendants' Somali supporters, wearing orange ribbons. The judge, Jeffrey

Miller, had served as a deputy attorney general in California for nearly twenty years and was known for his coolheadedness and independence. Concerned that the orange ribbons might influence the jury, he told the Somalis in the gallery to take them off. The prosecution's case began with Shikhalow's words: "Now is the time to finance the jihad." A prosecutor said that Aden Hashi Ayro was "a rock star among terrorists in Somalia."

Both sides labored to explain the meaning of snippets of eavesdropped conversations carried on in a foreign language. They brought in experts who summarized the politics of the region around Guriceel. Acronyms piled up as prosecutors described the Islamic Courts Union, the T.N.G., the T.F.G., Ahlu Sunna Waljama'a, Al Itihaad Al Islamiya, Al Shabaab—and explained which of these myriad groups should be considered terrorists and which of them were moderate. Six Somalis had made a dangerous journey to Djibouti in order to testify by video and vouch for Moalin as a gregarious, hardworking extrovert

who devoted himself to his family and the care of his ailing mother. One of them, a local police chief, claimed that he, not Ayro, was the one with the nickname Shikhalow, and said that he had fallen out of touch because, on May 1st, the day of Ayro's death, the Shabaab turned on the local community and he had to flee.

The core of the prosecution's case was excerpts from seventy-nine phone calls that had been culled from more than eighteen hundred conversations and assembled in white binders for the jury. A few alternative translations were put together by the defense. "I've never had an experience like this, where things have come in, rolling in so late," Judge Miller said, wading through the competing transcripts.

Doreh appears in eight of the transcripts. One contains a Somali proverb repeatedly cited by the prosecution as evidence that he was part of the conspiracy:

BASAALY: We are not less worthy than the guys fighting.

ISSA: Yes, that's it. It's said that it takes an



"Before we start, have you folks considered upgrading to Platinum Élite membership?"

equal effort to make a knife; whether one makes the handle part, hammers the iron, or bakes it in the fire.

In other conversations, he makes cryptic references to “books” and “pens” that were to be sent to “the Koran school,” which the government argued were code for Shabaab-related activity.

The jury deliberated for two days before finding all four defendants guilty. More than two hundred Somalis from San Diego and elsewhere wrote to the court, asking for leniency. Hassan, the president of the mosque’s board, said that Moalin’s actions were caused by his anger at the Ethiopian invasion of Guri-ceel. “His situation is as, if Mexican or Russian troops marched into San Diego and kill our families and friends,” he wrote. “Then our feelings and emotions will rise and we would be compelled to anything to alleviate such hardship.”

But by last summer, a year and a half after the convictions, when I visited San Diego, few Somalis would admit to having more than a passing acquaintance

with any of the convicted men. “I saw the outside of his house. I don’t ask anything about what is on the inside,” one of the Somali men who gather in the parking lot outside the Taste of Africa restaurant said, when I asked about Khadar. He said that he had never met Moalin.

One of three family members who turned up for an afternoon conference with Moalin’s attorney, Joshua Dratel, was a cousin who cares for Moalin’s mother while raising two children in a house up the street from the mosque. On the day of our second meeting, she wore a gray hijab. We sat on the couch with another relative while Moalin’s mother, dressed in a black hijab, sat on the floor, leaning against a doorjamb. The cousin went to the basement and hauled up a rolling suitcase that Moalin had with him when he was arrested. Inside were shirts and slacks, still wrapped in the cleaner’s cellophane, and a pair of loafers with shining buckles. “The people who they say he was supporting,” she said, “they don’t wear these

kinds of clothes.” She didn’t need to read the transcripts, she said. She knew her cousin was a good person.

A few days later, I met Hassan, the president of the mosque’s board, in a one-room office that he runs a medical-supply company out of. When I first contacted him, he had said that he would try to find Somalis who knew Moalin, Khadar, or Doreh and who would be willing to speak with me. Now he told me, gently, that no one was willing to speak.

Moments later, his cell phone rang. The caller, an F.B.I. agent, told Hassan that he was looking for a woman. Her name sounded Somali:

F.B.I. AGENT: She said she worked for you.

HASSAN: She never worked for us. She filled out an application, with fingerprints. But she never worked.

F.B.I. AGENT: Do you still have her contact information?

HASSAN: Um . . . if I give somebody’s private information, does that violate her privacy?

F.B.I. AGENT: I’m not asking you to do anything that you don’t want to do.

HASSAN: I think I have her number.

F.B.I. AGENT: Great.

Hassan did not have the number on him, he said. He would need to look it up. After he hung up, I asked how often local Somalis got calls like that. “All the time,” he said.

The fact that the Moalin investigation began with the N.S.A. was not revealed until after the conviction. Moalin’s attorney, Dratel, who learned about it through the news, called the timing “outrageous” and filed a motion for a new trial. All four defendants have since appealed, and the case is with the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals; oral arguments will not likely be heard until late this year. Moalin’s is “the only criminal case in which a defendant has been able to challenge the lawfulness of the 215 program,” Jameel Jaffer, the deputy legal director of the A.C.L.U., told me. Dratel has served as counsel for the Guantánamo detainee David Hicks, the alleged Silk Road operator Ross Ulbricht, and the filmmaker Laura Poitras. He quickly realized that Moalin’s case could set an important precedent for the legality of N.S.A. surveillance. The appeals court could choose to agree with an argument made by Dratel in his filings that bulk metadata collection violates the Fourth Amendment,



which requires search warrants to “particularly describ[e] the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.”

At his sentencing, Moalin said that he felt nervous and preferred to deliver his statement seated. He said that he was worried about Maryan, his wife, who had been given a diagnosis of breast cancer, and his five children. “I love America,” he said. He denied any affinity for the Shabaab. “They kill a lot of people, educated, from my people, my tribe,” he said. “I don’t like what they are doing in Somalia.”

Wardens at the federal prisons where Moalin and Doreh are now held denied my requests to interview the men. Khadar declined to talk to me. In a letter that Doreh wrote to me last fall, he said that he was “clueless as to any wrong doing . . . the essential part of faith is to respect others with peace and passion. I also do respect and abide by the laws of the country, and never had intention to break it, directly or indirectly. Is it because I am Muslim why I am being singled out, falsely accused, persecuted, and having my family relations destroyed? . . . Weren’t the United States Laws made with the view of providing equal rights for all?” He repeated something that he said to Moalin in the transcripts: “What’s going to happen will happen. . . . It’s Allah (God) the almighty who decides and determines man’s daily action.”

In November, 2013, Moalin was sentenced to eighteen years in prison, Khadar to thirteen years, Doreh to ten years. At the sentencing hearing, Judge Miller called Doreh “someone who apparently was an upstanding member of the Somali community.” He said that Moalin was “capable of both humanitarian virtue” and of collaborating with terrorists. He said that he understood the defense’s argument that “until we have walked a mile in Mr. Moalin’s shoes . . . what he has been through personally and what his country has been through,” we cannot understand “the choices he has made.”

“I don’t think we need to worry about any of these three gentlemen,” Miller said.

I met General Keith Alexander one morning last spring, in midtown Manhattan. He had retired from the N.S.A. a few weeks earlier and was soon to announce the launch of Iron-

Net Cybersecurity, a new private venture. He told me that the potential impact of Moalin’s arrest should not be underestimated, especially considering his association with Ayro. “You might ask, ‘What’s the best way to figure out who the bad guys are?’” he said. “What would you start with? You’d say, ‘Well, I need to know who his network of friends are, because chances are many of them are bad, too.’”

It’s possible that Moalin would have been caught without Section 215. His phone number was “a common link among pending F.B.I. investigations,” according to a report from the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board (PCLOB), an independent agency created in 2004 at the suggestion of the 9/11 Commission, which Obama had tasked with assessing Section 215. Later, in a congressional budget request, the Department of Justice said that the Moalin case was part of a broader investigation into Shabaab funding. Senator Ron Wyden, of Oregon, who, like Leahy, has pressured the N.S.A. to justify bulk surveillance, said, “To suggest that the government needed to spy on millions of law-abiding people in order to catch this individual is simply not true.” He continued, “I still haven’t seen any evidence that the dragnet surveillance of Americans’ personal information has done a single thing to improve U.S. national security.” Representative James Sensenbrenner, of Wisconsin, who introduced the Patriot Act in the House, agreed. “The intelligence community has never made a compelling case that bulk collection stops terrorism,” he told me.

Khalid al-Mihdhar’s phone calls to Yemen months before he helped hijack American Airlines Flight 77, on 9/11, led Obama, Alexander, Feinstein, and others to suggest that Section 215 could have prevented the attacks. “We know that we didn’t stop 9/11,” Alexander told me last spring. “People were trying, but they didn’t have the tools. This tool, we believed, would help them.”

But the PCLOB found that “it was not necessary to collect the entire nation’s calling records” to find Mihdhar. I asked William Gore, who was running the F.B.I.’s San Diego office at the time, if

the Patriot Act would have made a difference. “Could we have prevented 9/11? I don’t know,” he said. “You can’t find somebody if you’re not looking for them.”

Last year, as evidence of the fifty-four disrupted plots came apart, many people in Washington shifted their rhetoric on Section 215 away from specific cases and toward hypotheticals and analogies. “I have a fire-insurance policy on my house,” Robert Litt, the general counsel of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, said. “I don’t determine whether I want to keep that fire-insurance policy by the number of times it’s paid off.” James Clapper, the director of National Intelligence, has called this “the peace-of-mind metric.”

Michael Leiter, who led the National Counterterrorism Center under George W. Bush and Obama, told me that Section 215 was useful but not indispensable: “Could we live without Section 215? Yes. It’s not the most essential piece. But it would increase risk and make some things harder.”

In addition to phone metadata, the N.S.A. has used Section 215 to collect records from hotels, car-rental agencies, state D.M.V.s, landlords, credit-card companies, “and the like,” according to Justice Department reports. Once the N.S.A. has the phone metadata, it can circulate them through a shared database called “the corporate store.”

To some, this sounds less like fire insurance and more like a live-in fire marshal, authorized to root through the sock drawer in search of flammable material. “The open abuse is how they use that data,” Mike German, a former F.B.I. agent and lobbyist for the A.C.L.U., who is now a fellow at the Brennan Center, said. “It’s no longer about investigating a particular suspect.”

In 2013, *Le Monde* published documents from Edward Snowden’s archive showing that the N.S.A. obtained seventy million French phone-metadata records in one month. It is unknown whether any of these calls could be retrospectively associated with the Paris attacks. “The interesting thing to know would be whether these brothers made phone calls to Yemen in a way that



would have been collected by a program like Section 215 or another signals intelligence program,” Leiter told me last week. “I don’t know the answer to that question.”

Philip Mudd, a former C.I.A. and senior F.B.I. official, told me that tallying up individual cases did not capture the full value of Section 215. “Try to imagine a quicker way to understand a human being in 2015,” he said. “Take this woman in Paris. Who is she? How are you going to figure that out? You need historical data on everything she ever touched, to accelerate the investigation. Now, do we want to do that in America? That’s a different question, a political question.”

Documents released by Snowden and published by the *Washington Post* show that the N.S.A. accounted for \$10.5 billion of the \$52.6 billion “black budget,” the top-secret budget for U.S. intelligence spending, in 2013. About seventeen billion dollars of the black budget goes to counterterrorism each year, plus billions more through the unclassified budgets of the Pentagon, the State Department, and other agencies, plus a special five-billion-dollar fund proposed by Obama last year to fight the Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS).

The maximalist approach to intel-

ligence is not limited to the N.S.A. or to Section 215. A central terrorist watch list is called the Terrorist Identities Datamart Environment, or TIDE. According to a classified report released by the Web site the Intercept, TIDE, which is kept by the National Counterterrorism Center, lists more than a million people. The C.I.A., the N.S.A., and the F.B.I. can all “nominate” new individuals. In the weeks before the 2013 Chicago Marathon, analysts performed “due diligence” on “all of the records in TIDE of people who held a drivers license in Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin.” This was “based on the lessons learned from the Boston Marathon.”

In retrospect, every terrorist attack leaves a data trail that appears to be dotted with missed opportunities. In the case of 9/11, there was Mihdhar’s landlord, the airport clerk who sold Mihdhar his one-way ticket for cash, and the state trooper who pulled over another hijacker on September 9th. In August, 2001, F.B.I. headquarters failed to issue a search warrant for one of the conspirators’ laptops, despite a warning from the Minneapolis field office that he was “engaged in preparing to seize a Boeing 747-400 in commission of a terrorist act.”

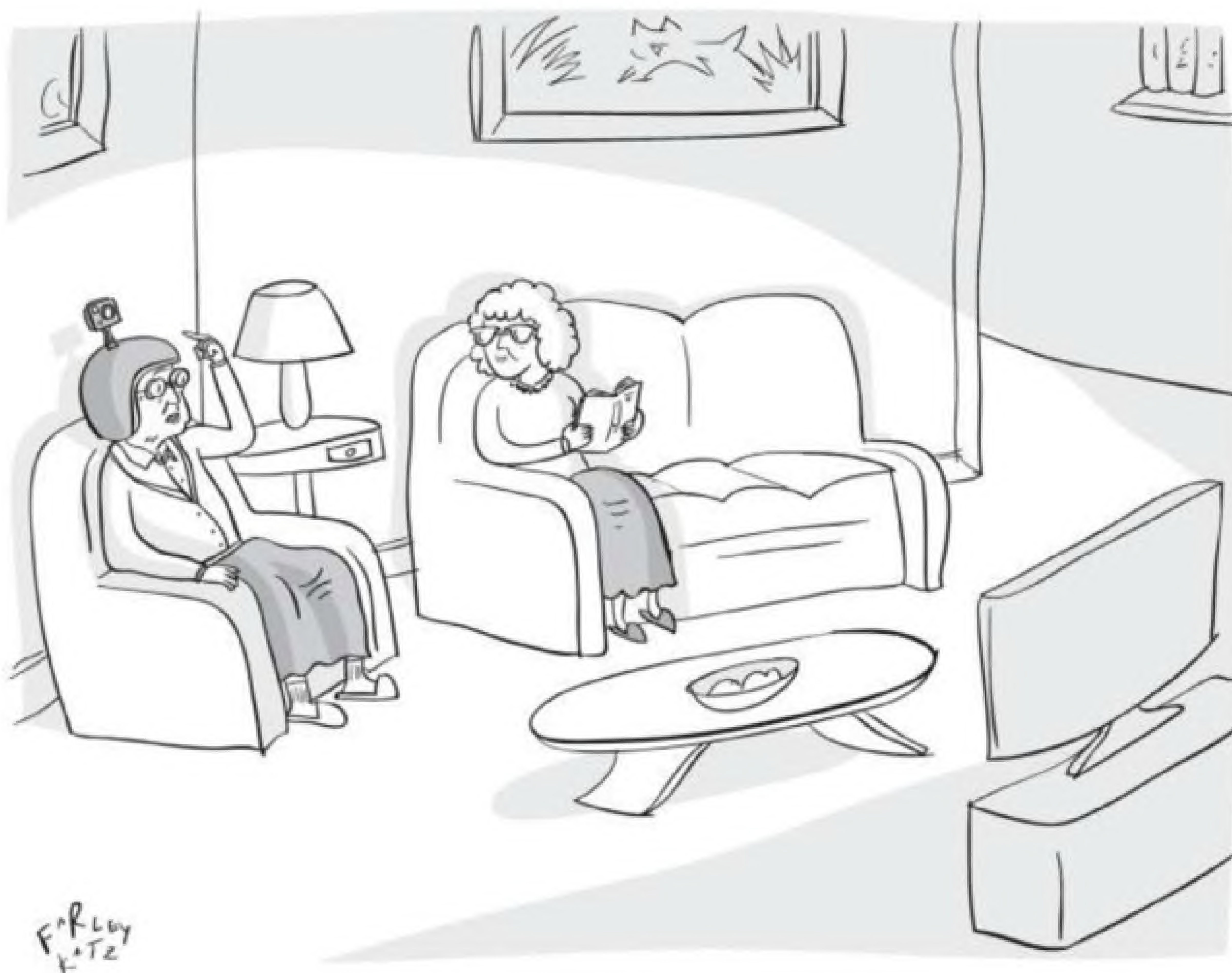
There was plenty of material in the

haystack. The government had adequate tools to collect even more. The problem was the tendency of intelligence agencies to hoard information, as well as the cognitive difficulty of anticipating a spectacular and unprecedented attack. The 9/11 Commission called this a “failure of the imagination.” Finding needles, the commission wrote in its report, is easy when you’re looking backward, deceptively so. They quoted the historian Roberta Wohlstetter writing about Pearl Harbor:

It is much easier *after* the event to sort the relevant from the irrelevant signals. After the event, of course, a signal is always crystal clear; we can now see what disaster it was signaling since the disaster has occurred. But before the event it is obscure and pregnant with conflicting meanings.

Before the event, every bit of hay is potentially relevant. “The most dangerous adversaries will be the ones who most successfully disguise their individual transactions to appear normal, reasonable, and legitimate,” Ted Senator, a data scientist who worked on an early post-9/11 program called Total Information Awareness, said, in 2002. Since then, intelligence officials have often referred to “lone-wolf terrorists,” “cells,” and, as Alexander has put it, the “terrorist who walks among us,” as though Al Qaeda were a fifth column, capable of camouflaging itself within civil society. Patrick Skinner, a former C.I.A. case officer who works with the Soufan Group, a security company, told me that this image is wrong. “We knew about these networks,” he said, speaking of the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks. Mass surveillance, he continued, “gives a false sense of security. It sounds great when you say you’re monitoring every phone call in the United States. You can put that in a PowerPoint. But, actually, you have no idea what’s going on.”

By flooding the system with false positives, big-data approaches to counterterrorism might actually make it harder to identify real terrorists before they act. Two years before the Boston Marathon bombing, Tamerlan Tsarnaev, the older of the two brothers alleged to have committed the attack, was assessed by the city’s Joint Terrorism Task Force. They determined that



“I’ve got the whole night on GoPro in case we want to relive the excitement later.”

he was not a threat. This was one of about a thousand assessments that the Boston J.T.T.F. conducted that year, a number that had nearly doubled in the previous two years, according to the Boston F.B.I. As of 2013, the Justice Department has trained nearly three hundred thousand law-enforcement officers in how to file “suspicious-activity reports.” In 2010, a central database held about three thousand of these reports; by 2012 it had grown to almost twenty-eight thousand. “The bigger haystack makes it harder to find the needle,” Sensenbrenner told me. Thomas Drake, a former N.S.A. executive and whistle-blower who has become one of the agency’s most vocal critics, told me, “If you target everything, there’s no target.” Drake favors what he calls “a traditional law-enforcement” approach to terrorism, gathering more intelligence on a smaller set of targets. Decisions about which targets matter, he said, should be driven by human expertise, not by a database.

One alternative to data-driven counterterrorism is already being used by the F.B.I. and other agencies. Known as “countering violent extremism,” this approach bears some resemblance to the community-policing programs of the nineteen-nineties, in which law enforcement builds a listening relationship with local leaders. “The kinds of people you want to look for, someone in the community might have seen them first,” Mudd said. After the Moalin arrests, the U.S. Attorney’s office in San Diego began hosting a bimonthly “Somali roundtable” with representatives from the F.B.I., the Department of Homeland Security, the sheriff’s office, local police, and many Somali organizations. “They’ve done a lot of work to reach out and explain what they’re about,” Abdi Mohamoud, the Somali non-profit director, who has attended the meetings, said.

Does the Moalin case justify putting the phone records of hundreds of millions of U.S. citizens into the hands of the federal government? “Stopping the money is a big deal,” Joel Brenner, the N.S.A.’s former inspector general, told me. Alexander called Moalin’s actions “the seed of a



“You came up in therapy this morning.”

future terrorist attack or set of attacks.”

But Senator Leahy contends that stopping a few thousand dollars, in one instance, over thirteen years, is a weak track record. The program “invades Americans’ privacy” and “has not been proven to be effective,” he said last week. The Moalin case, he continued, “was not a ‘plot’ but, rather, a material-support prosecution for sending a few thousand dollars to Somalia.”

On June 1st, Section 215 and the “roving wiretap” provision of the Patriot Act will expire. Sensenbrenner told me that he doesn’t expect Congress to renew either unless Section 215 is revised. “If Congress knew in 2001 how the FISA court was going to interpret it, I don’t think the Patriot Act would have passed,” he told me. In 2013, Leahy and Sensenbrenner introduced the U.S.A. Freedom Act, which would scale back the N.S.A.’s powers; the act would grant subpoena power for the PCLOB and create an ad-

vocate charged with representing privacy interests before the secret FISA court. The bill was watered down and passed by the House, but it failed to reach the Senate floor. Mitch McConnell, the Senate’s top Republican, said that the N.S.A. needed every available tool for the fight against ISIS. “This is the worst possible time to be tying our hands behind our back,” he said.

The Paris attacks offered yet another opportunity to argue for the value of Section 215. Senator Bob Corker, of Tennessee, said that his priority was “insuring we don’t overly hamstring the N.S.A.’s ability to collect this kind of information.” Senator Chuck Grassley, of Iowa, said, “If it can happen in Paris, it can happen in New York again, or Washington, D.C.” The Senators focussed on attacks that Section 215 had not stopped and imagined attacks that it could theoretically stop. There was no mention of what it had actually stopped, or of Basaaly Moalin. ♦

Isaac Bashevis Singer

INVENTIONS



PHOTOGRAPH BY JENS MORTENSEN

Since moving to the country, I find myself growing sleepy by ten o'clock at night. I retire at the same time as my parakeets and the chickens in the coop. In bed, I peruse "Phantasms of the Living," but I must soon turn off the light. A dreamless sleep—or one with dreams I can't recall—takes hold of me until two in the morning. At two, I wake up completely rested, my head buzzing with plans and possibilities. On the winter night I will describe, it came to me to write about a Communist—in fact, a Communist theoretician—who attends a leftist conference on world peace and sees a ghost. I saw it all clearly: the meeting hall, the portraits of Marx and Engels, the table covered with a green cloth, the Communist, Morris Krakower, a short, stocky man with a head of close-cropped hair and a pair of steely eyes behind thick-lensed pince-nez. The conference takes place in Warsaw in the thirties, the era of Stalinist terror and the Moscow Trials. Morris Krakower disguises his defense of Stalin in the jargon of Marxist theory, but everyone grasps his meaning. In his speech, he proclaims that only the dictatorship of the proletariat can insure peace, and, therefore, no deviation either to the right or to the left can be tolerated. World peace is in the hands of the N.K.V.D.

After the reports, the delegates congregate for a friendly glass of tea. Again, Comrade Krakower holds forth. Officially, he is one of the delegates, but in reality he is a representative of the Comintern. His goatee is reminiscent of Lenin's; his voice has a hard metallic ring. He is thoroughly grounded in Marxism and knows several languages; he has delivered lectures at the Sorbonne. Twice a year, he travels to Moscow. And, as if all this were not sufficient, he is also the son of a rich man: his father owns oil wells near Drohobycz. He doesn't have to be a paid Party functionary.

Morris Krakower is clever at conspiracy, but intrigue isn't necessary here. The press is admitted to the sessions; the police have infiltrated their spies, but Morris needn't fear arrest. Even if he were arrested, it would be no great tragedy. In prison, he could devote his time to reading. He would

smuggle out manuscripts to arouse the masses. A few weeks of prison can only enhance the prestige of a Party worker.

Outdoors, there's a frost. Toward evening, snow falls. The tea drinking ends, and Morris Krakower heads for his hotel. The streets are smooth, white fields through which trolley cars glide half-empty. The shopkeepers have all lowered their window shades and are fast asleep. Above the rooftops, numberless stars glitter. If intelligent beings exist on other planets, Krakower reflects, perhaps their lives are also regulated by five-year plans. He smiles at the thought. His thick lips part, revealing large, square teeth.

A madwoman sits on the curb. Next to her is a basket full of old newspapers and rags. Withdrawn and dishevelled, her eyes shining fiercely, she converses with her demon. Somewhere nearby, a tomcat yowls. A night watchman in a fur jacket and hood is checking the shopkeepers' locks. Morris Krakower goes into his hotel, gets the key from the clerk, and takes the elevator to the fourth floor. The long corridor reminds him of a prison. He opens the door to his room and enters. The chambermaid has changed the bed linen. All he needs to do is undress. Tomorrow, the conference starts late, so Morris will be able to catch up on sleep.

He puts on new pajamas. How uncharismatic a barefoot leader in ill-fitting pajamas looks! He lies down on the bed and turns out the light on the night table. The room is dark and cool, and he falls asleep immediately.

Suddenly, he feels the blanket being pulled at his feet. He wakes up. What can it be? Is there a cat in the room? A dog? He shakes off his sleepiness and turns on the light. No, there's no one there. He must have imagined it. He turns the light out and goes to sleep, but someone starts to pull the blanket again. Morris has to pull it back or else become uncovered. "What kind of business is this?" he asks himself. He turns on the light once more. Apparently, his nerves are on edge. He is surprised, because he is in good health and well rested lately. Everything is going smoothly at the conference.

He removes the blanket and exam-

ines the sheets. He gets out of bed and checks to make sure the door is chained. He peeks into the closet. Nothing. "Well, I must have been dreaming," he concludes, although he knows it was no dream. "A hallucination?" Morris Krakower is annoyed at himself. He turns out the light and goes back to bed. "Enough of this stupidity!"

But someone is definitely pulling the blanket again. Morris sits up in bed with such force that the mattress springs ring out. Someone, some invisible being, is pulling the blanket and pulling it with the strength of human hands. Morris doesn't move a muscle. Have I gone out of my mind? he thinks. Am I suffering from a nervous breakdown?

He releases the blanket, and the invisible presence, the power whose existence is impossible, immediately draws it toward the foot of the bed. Morris is uncovered to the knees. "What the devil is this?" he says aloud. He doesn't want to admit it, but he is frightened. He can hear his heart pounding. There must be some explanation. It can't be a ghost.

As soon as the word enters his mind, terror grips him. Maybe this is some kind of sabotage. But by whom? And how? The blanket has fallen off the bed entirely. Morris wants to turn the light on, but he can't find the switch. His feet are cold, but his head is hot. By accident he knocks the lamp off the night table. He jumps out of bed and tries to turn on the overhead light, but he bumps into a chair. He reaches the switch and turns on the light. The blanket is lying on the floor. The parchment lampshade has toppled from the lamp. Again, Morris looks in the closet, goes to the window and raises the blinds. The street is white, empty. He searches for a door leading to another room, but there isn't one. He bends down and feels around under the bed, opens the door to the corridor. No one is there. "Should I call the porter? But what can I tell him? No, I can't make a fool of myself!" he decides. He closes the door, locks it, and lets the blinds down. He replaces the blanket on the bed and sets the lampshade back on the lamp. "This is insane," he mutters.

Morris Krakower has broken out in a sweat, though the room is cold. The

palms of his hands are moist. "It must be some kind of neurasthenia," he says, trying to reassure himself. He considers leaving the light on for a while, but is ashamed at his cowardice. "I must not allow myself to fall victim to such superstition!" He switches the light off and walks unsteadily back to his bed. He is no longer the same self-confident Morris Krakower, spokesman for the Comintern. He is a frightened man. Will whatever it is start pulling the blanket again?

For a while, Morris lies motionless. The blanket doesn't budge. Outside the window, he hears the muffled clanging of a trolley car. He is still in the center of a civilized city and not in a desert or at the North Pole. "It's all in my mind!" he reasons. "I must sleep!" He shuts his eyes. Immediately he senses a tug. No, it isn't just a tug but a strong yank. In a second, it has dragged the blanket down to his hips. Morris reaches out, grabs the blanket, and tries to jerk it back quickly. But he has to exert all his strength, because his nocturnal visitor is pulling powerfully in the opposite direction. The visitor is stronger, and Morris must yield. He wheezes, grunts, reviles him. The brief struggle leaves Morris covered with perspiration. "What woes have befallen me!" he says, repeating an expression his mother used. That such utter madness should happen to him, of all people! What could it be? "God in Heaven, can there really be demons? If so, then everything falls apart."

I had fallen asleep and dreamed one of those dreams which recur again and again over the years. I am in a windowless cellar. I either live there or use it as a hideout. The cellar is deep, dark, the dirt floor rutted and mounded. I am afraid, but I know that I must remain there for some time. I open a door and find myself in another small dark room with a straw bed that has no bedding. I sit down on the bed and try to talk myself out of my fear, but it only grows. I hear noises. Dark creatures, soft as cobwebs, creep about in the corridor, whispering. I must escape, but the way back is blocked. I go toward a second exit, but is it there? The corridor narrows,

twists, descends. I am no longer walking but crawling, wormlike, toward an opening, but will I reach it? Wait! I've left something in the other room—a document, a manuscript—and I must go back for it. This isn't the only complication. It's extraordinary, but growths resembling antlers have sprouted on my arms. The last few seconds of the dream are thick with tortuous difficulties too bizarre and numerous to remember. The whole thing is fast becoming ludicrous, and even in my sleep I know that I must awaken from this nightmare, because the power that guides dreams never wishes to risk revealing itself. It is poking fun at its own devices. It throws in weird, incoherent words, transforming the illusion into a caricature.

I open my eyes and realize that I have to go to the bathroom. What an involved way to let a person know that

he has to urinate! Afterward, I return to my bed and lie quietly, amazed at the deviousness of the sleeping brain. Can there be an explanation for all this? Is there some law governing nightmares? One thing is certain: this dream returns like a leitmotif in a symphony of madness.

After a while, I remind myself of my hero, Morris Krakower. What's happened to him? Oh, yes, his silent opponent is pulling harder, and Morris must let go. So engrossed is he in the tug-of-war that his fear is momentarily forgotten. Suddenly, the other being stops pulling the blanket, and Morris Krakower perceives a shape. He realizes that all this blanket pulling was just a way of drawing his attention to this apparition.

Not far from him, at the foot of the bed, stands Comrade Damschak, who a few years ago travelled to Soviet Rus-

OBLIVION

In the field the cows consider
oblivion, mulling
it over. They & their many
stomachs know nothing
stays lost forever—that grass, almost
cruel, resurrects again,
again. They know even
drought will end
though the family they belong to
forgets. Cows know the slow
closing eye of the pond
will once more open
& the sky—rain will find
their bowed backs,
the burnt earth's offering.
Cows keep no cry, only
a slave's low moan.
This slight rise
they must climb.

—Kevin Young

sia, published several angry attacks there, in which he accused a number of writers of Trotskyism, and then vanished. The face is Damschak's, but the body is as if dissected, like the cadavers used in medical school to teach anatomy. The muscles and the blood vessels are laid bare. They glow with their own phosphorescent light. Morris Krakower is so stunned that he again forgets to be afraid. The apparition slowly fades before his astonished gaze. For a few minutes, only a membrane or a faint tracery like a network persists, no longer there but not completely gone. Soon even this tracery dissolves.

Morris Krakower lies motionless for minutes or perhaps seconds (who can measure time under such circumstances?). Then he reaches for the lamp and turns it on. Now he is past fear. He picks up the blanket, which has almost completely fallen off the bed. He knows with an inner certainty that he will now be left alone. This was Comrade Damschak's way of forcing him to look at his phantom.

But how? And why? How can this be understood? It defies scientific explanation. Like food stuck in the throat, which can't be swallowed or coughed up, it fixes a question in Morris's mind that can be neither answered nor dismissed. His brain falls still. For the first time in his memory, he is entirely without thoughts, as if his mind were suspended in a vacuum. He is cold, but he doesn't cover himself. He has one hope—that the whole thing was a dream. But something tells him that he knows the difference between dreaming and reality. He glances at the clock on the night table—it is a quarter past three. He holds the clock to his ear and listens to its inner mechanism at work. Outside, a trolley car passes by, and he can hear the scraping of the wheels. Reality still exists.

For a long time, Morris sits in his bed without an idea, without a theory—a Leninist who has just seen a ghost. Then he stretches out, covers himself, and lays his head on the pillow. He doesn't dare turn out the light, but he closes his eyes.

"Well, what does one do now?" he asks himself, and he can find no an-

swer. He falls asleep, and when he wakes up again he knows the answer: it was all a dream. If that were not the case, he, Morris Krakower, would have to surrender everything: Communism, atheism, materialism, the Party, all his convictions and commitments. And what would he do then? Turn religious? Pray in the synagogue? There are facts that a man must disown, even to himself. There are secrets one must take to the grave.

One thing is clear: the real Damschak was not here, because his body is in Russia. What Morris saw was a mental image, which his brain had for some reason constructed. Perhaps it was because Morris and Damschak were close friends, and he hasn't yet made peace with the fact that Damschak turned traitor in Russia. It is possible for a man to dream while awake.

Morris Krakower falls asleep again. In the morning, when he raises the blinds, the sun bathes the room in light. The winter day is as bright as summer. Morris examines the blanket. He finds the marks that his fingers have left in the weave. The threads look as if they had been teased apart in places. So what does this prove? Undoubtedly, he really pulled the blanket. But the other end of the blanket reveals no sign of a struggle. The ghost has left no trace.

The short speech that is delivered by Comrade Krakower that evening lacks the logic, certainty, and smoothness of the one he gave the previous day. He stammers occasionally; he makes errors. He keeps removing the pince-nez from his nose and replacing them. The essence of his speech is that at the present time there is only one revolutionary party: the Communist Party. The main organ of the Party is the Central Committee, its secretariat. To doubt the Party is to doubt Marx, Lenin, Stalin, the ultimate triumph of the proletariat—in other words, to go over to the camp of capitalism, imperialism, fascism, religion, superstition. ♦

*(Translated, from the Yiddish,
by Aliza Shevrin.)*

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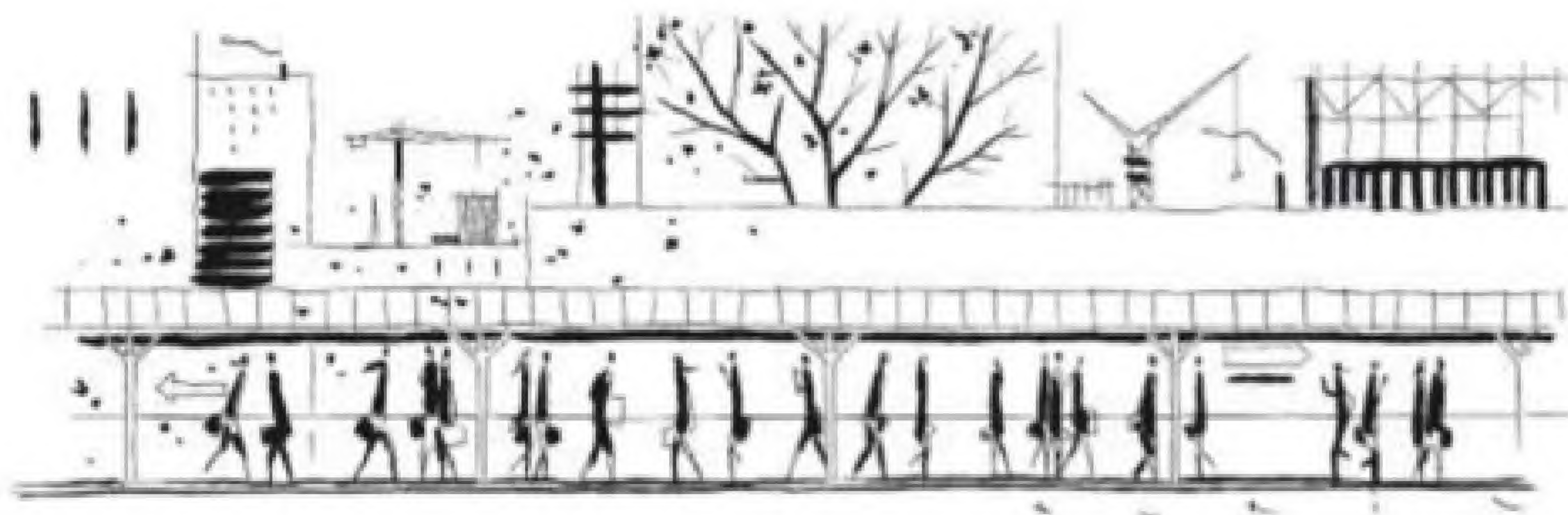
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THE CRITICS



ON TELEVISION

HOUSE OF CHORDS

Musical dynasties on "Empire" and "Mozart in the Jungle."

BY EMILY NUSSBAUM

Empire," a new drama on Fox about a family-run hip-hop label, is the latest entry in a category for which I am an unrepentant sucker, the serial drama about any genre of music. Only fifteen years ago, my tribe was forced to endure multiple seasons of a show before a single "very special musical episode" emerged, like a prize in a box of Cracker Jacks. Then came "American Idol," in 2002, and its success kicked open the door for scripted alternatives—among them "Glee" (pop), "Smash" (Broadway), "Nashville" (country), "Bunheads" (classical, standards, and pop), and the upscale HBO option "Treme" (New Orleans jazz). For one glorious season, all of these shows ran simultaneously: we miss you, 2012.

Admittedly, not every show was good. A few were terrible. Of the survivors, "Glee" is finally on an upswing, while "Nashville" has devolved from an enjoyable showcase for Connie Britton and Hayden Panettiere into a meditation on how men with goatees unexpectedly become fathers. And yet I'm still watching both shows, every week. In other words, "Empire" wouldn't have to be much good for me to enjoy it. But it is good, or, at least, it's effective—unapologetic melodramatic fun, to judge from the first two episodes. It's certainly an ideal vehicle for Taraji P. Henson, who plays Cookie Lyon, a woman who struts out of prison in a leopard-print dress and a white fur coat—the same outfit, she explains, that she wore on her way in.

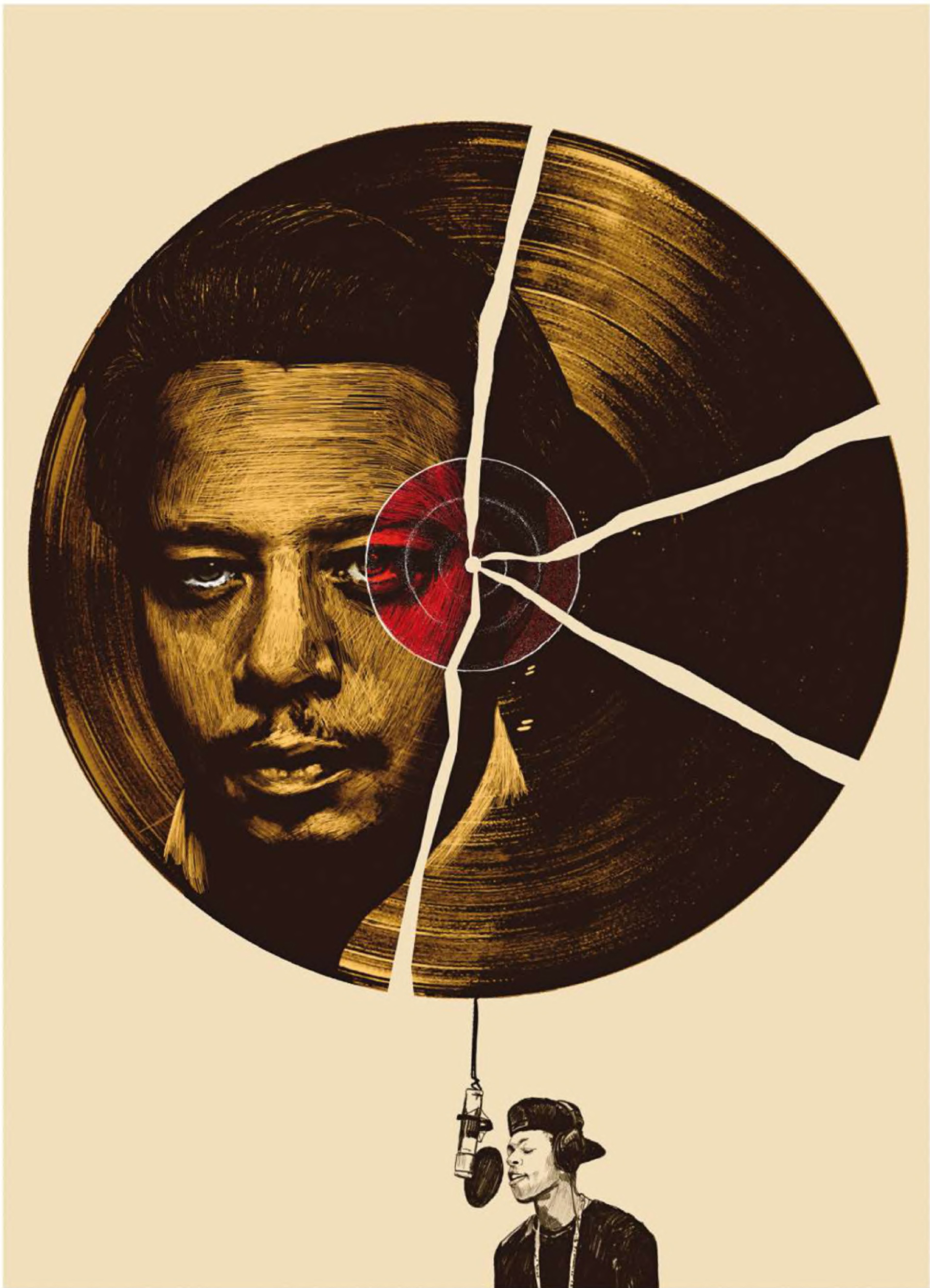
The music is produced by Timbaland; as with "Nashville," the original songs are available on iTunes. And, although every other line is exposition or bombast, you don't go to Lee Daniels (who created the show, with Danny Strong, and who directed "Precious" and "The Butler") for subtlety. By the final scene of the pilot, "Empire" suggests an arc that's just what a drama-club junkie craves: an escalating series of songwriting collaborations, recording-studio breakdowns, onstage battles, music-business dirty tricks, and, ideally, some sort of insane awards ceremony at the end, all satin and payback.

The show is a pleasure in another way, too: since it's set in a largely African-American industry, it has an easy, organic platform on which to play out stories about race and class, ones that rarely show up on network TV. The plot is urban "King Lear": given a diagnosis of A.L.S., Lucious Lyon (Terrence Howard, with an impressive conk) must decide which of his three sons—the icy businessman, the shambolic party boy, or the sweet gay genius—will inherit Empire Enterprises. A drug dealer turned iconic superstar, Lucious is the Jay Z figure, a C.E.O. deluged by appearance requests from Barack Obama. When Cookie, his ex-wife, gets out of prison, she starts throwing elbows, demanding her share: she beats one son with a broom, schemes with another, manipulates the third, and basically sashays around as if she were Joan Collins circa 1983. "You messing

with the wrong bitch, Lucious," she tells him. When she meets his new woman, she purrs "Boo boo, kitty." Along with Kerry Washington, Angela Bassett, Viola Davis, Gabrielle Union, Gabourey Sidibe, and Octavia Spencer, Henson is part of an exodus of black actresses from film to television, many of whom have found juicier, more varied, and more central roles than are available in Hollywood. In hoop earrings the size of manhole covers, Henson charges up the show with a wild, infectious brio, turning hackneyed lines into platinum zingers.

50 Cent, the rap star who created "Power," a series on the Starz network, has complained that "Empire" is a ripoff, and it's true that both shows feature an African-American twist on the established antihero cable genre, with gangster patriarchs who balance legitimate companies (in "Power," it's a night club) with a history in the drug trade. But, while "Power" is comparatively solemn about its protagonist's tormented double life, a grim fantasy of bad-boy authority, "Empire" is as loosey-goosey as summer stock: for all his threats, Lucious feels about as menacing as Christopher Walken's Captain Hook. The cast is game, including Sidibe as Lucious's assistant, Trai Byers as Andre, the most bourgeois (and also the most frequently shirtless) son, and Bryshere Gray (the rapper known as Yazz the Greatest) as Hakeem, the one drawn to "bitches and booze."

The standout, however, is Jussie Smollett, who underplays the gay son, Jamal, with mellow confidence. "Empire" isn't the first TV show to feature a gay hip-hop artist: the underwatched but excellent "The L.A. Complex," a few years back, featured a memorable and textured story about a rapper named Kaldrick King, whose romantic relationship turned abusive when he panicked over appearing less than "hard" to his fans. "Empire" seems, at first, to be on a more conventional narrative path: Jamal is bright, talented, and decent—a credit to his sexuality. He's in a committed relationship with a loving boyfriend, who is Latino. (Cookie, like Sue Sylvester on "Glee," is the show's cathartic mouthpiece, spouting a mixture of real talk and slurs: when she's not dismissing her light-skinned



The plot of "Empire" is urban "King Lear": Lucious Lyon must decide which of his sons will inherit his record label.

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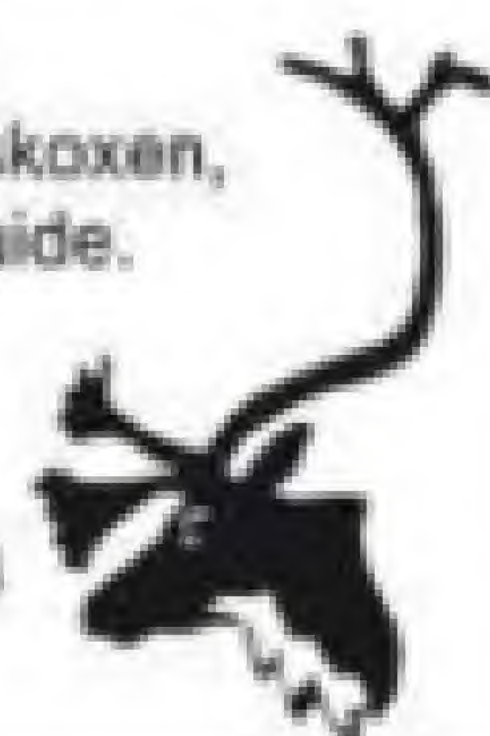
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competition as "little Halle Berry," she calls the boyfriend "La Cucaracha" and her son "faggot," at once rudely and affectionately.)

But the relationship between Jamal and Cookie gets more interesting when she decides to make him famous. "You're so pure, only a couple hundred white kids in Brooklyn and San Francisco even know your stuff," she scoffs. The climax is an affecting number called "Good Enough," which Jamal sings over eighties-era flashbacks of his father dumping him in a garbage can—an incident reportedly taken from Daniel's life. The sequence could have been bathetic, but it carries surprising emotional weight, and the conversation that follows hints at a fascinating possibility: less a conventional coming-out story than an exploration of how Jamal's gayness and his history of abuse might be co-opted and marketed, a new brand for a new era.

With any melodrama, it's impossible to tell, early on, if it can keep the pilot lit. (All of my favorite musical shows had exciting opening episodes, after all.) The second installment is more scattershot, although there's a fabulously anarchic sequence in which a drunk Hakeem is filmed in a viral video calling Obama a sellout. (When Lucious phones to apologize, the President hangs up on him.) Jamal's musical torment feels a notch more manipulative: as he croons, "Tell the truth, tell the truth," tears stream down his face. But there is an audaciousness to that musical montage, too, which draws parallels between the son's shame at his sexuality and his father's history in poverty. It gambles on a high-risk blend of kitsch, corn, and cool. "Streets ain't made for everybody," as Cookie puts it. "That's why they made sidewalks."

Amazon has plastered the New York City subway system with ads for "Mozart in the Jungle," using imagery so baffling that no one can figure out what the show's about. This may be because the reality might not seem so steamy: classical musicians in Manhattan. More specifically, it's an ensemble drama about the fictional New York Symphony, where an elderly bad-boy conductor, played by Malcolm McDowell, is stepping down to make way

for a younger, hairier maestro: Rodrigo, who is loosely based on the real-life conductor Gustavo Dudamel, and is played by the fabulous Gael García Bernal as a sort of feral Bambi.

The series, created by Roman Coppola, Jason Schwartzman, and Alex Timbers, is adapted from the oboist Blair Tindall's confessional memoir, which painted a bleak portrait of an elite industry that dooms most of its performers to near-penury. The first episode approaches this material from a heightened, cable-comedy angle, emphasizing the salacious side of Tindall's tell-all, as if it were a violist tugging down her scoop-necked black dress. There's a silly montage of various musicians and their sexual styles; hot maestros are besieged by crowds of autograph hounds. Yet the silliness can be infectious, too, as with a legitimately wild variation on a rap battle—a booze-soaked party game in which an oboist and a flutist spin a wooden wheel, challenging one another to ever more aggressive feats of musical one-upmanship.

As the series continues, it keeps tossing in chunks of surrealism, like Rodrigo communing with Mozart's ghost. But it calms down, too, building on an appealing set of characters, including a hard-bitten middle-aged oboist, played by Debra Monk, and a maestro mistress, played by Saffron Burrows. Bernadette Peters plays the savvy corporate leader who has to "handle" her unpredictable hire; Lola Kirke (Jemima Kirke's languid sister) is an ingénue, Hailey. It's not the best-plotted series: stories tumble by like clothes in an off-kilter dryer. But there's charm in intimate moments, as when two worldly women share confidences, or a lovely sequence in which Rodrigo wanders around the city, sniffing the air and playing pickup chess. In one of the best scenes, Rodrigo, taking a limo across the Brooklyn Bridge, gets intoxicated by the metallic clatter around him. "Do you hear that?" he says, gazing into Hailey's eyes. "Ba-tum-ta-tum-ta-tum-ta-ta—yeah. The snare drums." He puts his arm around her and savors the whirr of cars: "The strings." As the two lean their heads to the side, they close their eyes, unafraid to seem foolish; like the show itself, they're on the side of pleasure, whatever form it takes. ♦

A CRITIC AT LARGE

BERLIN STORY

How the Germans invented gay rights—more than a century ago.

BY ALEX ROSS



Magnus Hirschfeld and two cross-dressers, outside the Institute for Sexual Science.

On August 29, 1867, a forty-two-year-old lawyer named Karl Heinrich Ulrichs went before the Sixth Congress of German Jurists, in Munich, to urge the repeal of laws forbidding sex between men. He faced an audience of more than five hundred distinguished legal figures, and as he walked to the lectern he felt a pang of fear. “There is still time to keep silent,” he later remembered telling himself. “Then there will be an end to all your heart-pounding.” But Ulrichs, who had earlier disclosed his same-sex desires in letters to relatives, did not stop. He told the assembly that people with a “sexual nature opposed to common custom” were being persecuted for impulses that “nature, mysteriously governing and creating, had implanted in them.” Pandemonium erupted, and Ulrichs was forced to cut short his

remarks. Still, he had an effect: a few liberal-minded colleagues accepted his notion of an innate gay identity, and a Bavarian official privately confessed to similar yearnings. In a pamphlet titled “Gladius furens,” or “Raging Sword,” Ulrichs wrote, “I am proud that I found the strength to thrust the first lance into the flank of the hydra of public contempt.”

The first chapter of Robert Beachy’s “Gay Berlin: Birthplace of a Modern Identity” (Knopf) begins with an account of Ulrichs’s audacious act. The title of the chapter, “The German Invention of Homosexuality,” telegraphs a principal argument of the book: although same-sex love is as old as love itself, the public discourse around it, and the political movement to win rights for it, arose in Germany in the late nineteenth and early twentieth

centuries. This message may surprise those who believe that gay identity came of age in London and New York, sometime between the Oscar Wilde trials and the Stonewall riots. The brutal repression of gay people during the Nazi period largely erased German gay history from international consciousness, and even from German memory. Beachy, a historian who teaches at Yonsei University, in Seoul, ends his book by noting that Germans hold gay-pride celebrations each June on what is known as Christopher Street Day, in honor of the street where the Stonewall protest unfolded. Gayness is cast as an American import.

Ulrichs, essentially the first gay activist, encountered censorship and ended up going into exile, but his ideas very gradually took hold. In 1869, an Austrian littérateur named Karl Maria Kertbeny, who was also opposed to sodomy laws, coined the term “homosexuality.” In the eighteen-eighties, a Berlin police commissioner gave up prosecuting gay bars and instead instituted a policy of bemused tolerance, going so far as to lead tours of a growing demi-monde. In 1896, *Der Eigene* (“The Self-Ownning”), the first gay magazine, began publication. The next year, the physician Magnus Hirschfeld founded the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee, the first gay-rights organization. By the beginning of the twentieth century, a canon of gay literature had emerged (one early advocate used the phrase “Staying silent is death,” nearly a century before AIDS activists coined the slogan “Silence = Death”); activists were bemoaning negative depictions of homosexuality (Thomas Mann’s “Death in Venice” was one target); there were debates over the ethics of outing; and a schism opened between an inclusive, mainstream faction and a more riotous, anarchistic wing. In the nineteen-twenties, with gay films and pop songs in circulation, a mass movement seemed at hand. In 1929, the Reichstag moved toward the decriminalization of homosexuality, although the chaos caused by that fall’s stock-market crash prevented a final vote.

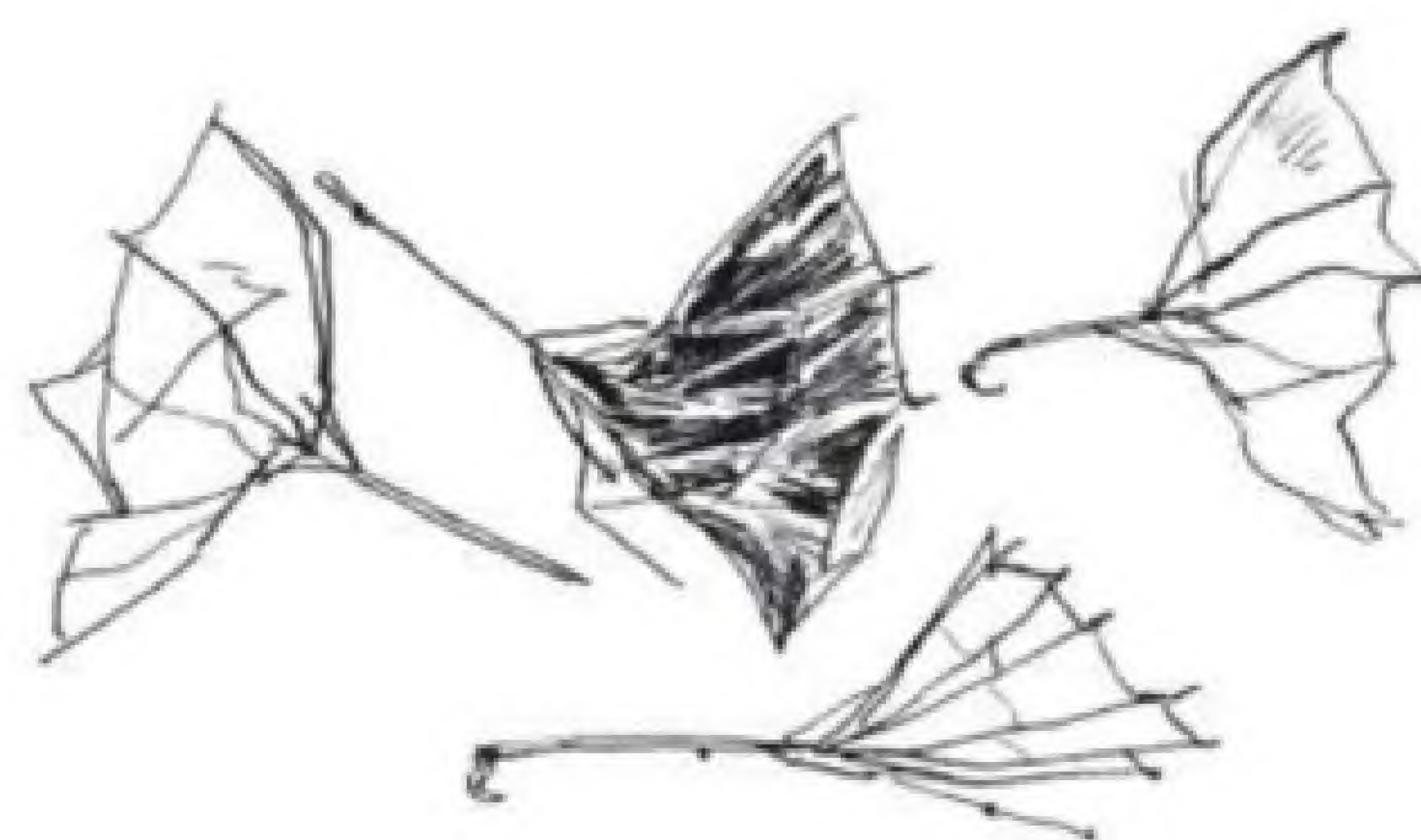
Why did all this happen in Germany? And why is the story not better known? Beachy, focussing on Berlin’s social fabric, doesn’t delve too deeply

into larger philosophical questions, but the answers are hardly elusive. The inclination to read German history as an extended prelude to Nazism—the “heading for Hitler” narrative—has tended to exclude countervailing progressive forces, especially those of the Wilhelmine period, from 1871 to 1918. The towering legacy of German idealism and Romanticism, which helps to explain why the gay-rights movement took root in Germany, has itself become somewhat obscure, especially outside the German school system. And so we are surprised by the almost inevitable. Nowhere else could a figure like Ulrichs have made his speech, and nowhere else would cries of “Stop!” have been answered by shouts of “No, no! Continue, continue!”

In Leontine Sagan’s 1931 film “Mädchen in Uniform,” the first sympathetic portrayal of lesbians onscreen, a boarding-school pupil named Manuela plays the title role in a school production of Friedrich Schiller’s 1787 play “Don Carlos,” an emblematic Romantic tale of forbidden love and resistance to tyranny. “A moment passed in paradise is not too dearly bought with death,” Manuela declaims onstage, conveying Don Carlos’s love for his stepmother. Afterward, fortified by punch, Manuela announces her love for one of her teachers, precipitating a scandal. The episode suggests the degree to which the German cultural and intellectual tradition, particularly in the Romantic age, which stretched from Goethe and Schiller to Schopenhauer and Wagner, emboldened those who came to identify themselves as gay and lesbian. (“Schiller sometimes writes very freely,” an elderly woman worriedly observes in Sagan’s film.)

Close to the heart of the Romantic ethos was the idea that heroic individuals could attain the freedom to make their own laws, in defiance of society. Literary figures pursued a cult of friendship that bordered on the homoerotic, although most of the time the fervid talk of embraces and kisses remained just talk. But the poet August von Platen’s paeans to soldiers and gondoliers had a more specific import: “Youth, come! Walk with me, and arm in arm / Lay your dark cheek on your /

Bosom friend’s blond head!” Platen’s leanings attracted an unwelcome spotlight in 1829, when the acidly silver-tongued poet Heinrich Heine, insulted by anti-Semitic remarks that Platen had lobbed at him, satirized his rival as a womanly man, a lover of “passive, Pythagorean character,” referring to the freed slave Pythagoras, one of Nero’s male favorites. Heine’s tone is merrily vicious, but he inserts one note of compassion: had Platen lived in



Roman times, “it may be that he would have expressed these feelings more openly, and perhaps have passed for a true poet.” In other words, repression had stifled Platen’s sexuality and, thus, his creativity.

Gay urges welled up across Europe during the Romantic era; France, in particular, became a haven, since statutes forbidding sodomy had disappeared from its books during the Revolutionary period, reflecting a distaste for law based on religious belief. The Germans, though, were singularly ready to utter the unspeakable. Schopenhauer took a special interest in the complexities of sexuality; in a commentary added in 1859 to the third edition of “The World as Will and Representation,” he offered a notably mellow view of what he called “pederasty,” saying that it was present in every culture. “It arises in some way from human nature itself,” he said, and there was no point in opposing it. (He cited Horace: “Expel nature with a pitchfork, she still comes back.”) Schopenhauer proceeded to expound the dubious theory that nature promoted homosexuality in older men as a way of discouraging them from continuing to procreate.

Not surprisingly, Karl Heinrich Ulrichs seized on Schopenhauer’s curious piece of advocacy when he began his campaign; he quoted the philosopher in one of his coming-out letters to his relatives. Ulrichs might also

have mentioned Wagner, who, in “Die Walküre” and “Tristan und Isolde,” depicted illicit passions that many late-nineteenth-century homosexuals saw as allegories for their own experience. Magnus Hirschfeld, in his 1914 book “The Homosexuality of Men and Women,” noted that the Wagner festival in Bayreuth had become a “favorite meeting place” for homosexuals, and quoted a classified ad, from 1894, in which a young man had sought a handsome companion for a Tyrolean bicycling expedition; it was signed “Numa 77, general delivery, Bayreuth.” Ulrichs had published his early pamphlets under the pseudonym Numa Numantius.

Encouraging signals from cultural giants were one thing, legal protections another. The most revelatory chapter of Beachy’s book concerns Leopold von Meerscheidt-Hüllessem, a Berlin police commissioner in the Wilhelmine period, who, perhaps more than any other figure, enabled “gay Berlin” to blossom. Meerscheidt-Hüllessem’s motivations remain unclear. He was of a “scheming nature,” a colleague noted, and liked nothing better than to gather masses of data on the citizenry, like a less malignant J. Edgar Hoover. His Department of Homosexuals, founded in 1885, maintained a carefully annotated catalogue of Berliners who conformed to the type. He evidently was not gay, although his superior, Bernhard von Richthofen, the police department’s president, is said to have had a taste for young soldiers. Meerscheidt-Hüllessem might have reasoned that it was better to domesticate this new movement than to let it become politically radicalized or overtaken by criminal elements.

For whatever reason, Meerscheidt-Hüllessem took a fairly benevolent attitude toward Berlin’s same-sex bars and dance halls, at least in the better-heeled parts of the city. He was on cordial terms with many regulars, as none other than August Strindberg attested in his autobiographical novel “The Cloister” (1898), which evokes a same-sex costume ball at the Café National: “The Police Inspector and his guests had seated themselves at a table in the centre of one end of the room,

close to which all the couples had to pass. . . . The Inspector called them by their Christian names and summoned some of the most interesting among them to his table.” Meerscheidt-Hüllessem and his associates also showed solicitude for gay victims of blackmail, and went so far as to offer counselling. In 1900, the commissioner wrote to Hirschfeld expressing pride that he had saved people from “shame and death”: blackmail and suicide. A week later, in a grim irony, this enigmatic protector killed himself—not on account of his homosexual associations but because he was exposed as having taken bribes from a millionaire banker accused of statutory rape.

Hirschfeld’s Scientific-Humanitarian Committee probably could not have existed without Meerscheidt-Hüllessem’s tacit approval. (The commissioner was invited to the organization’s first meeting, although he probably did not attend.) Hirschfeld, who was born in 1868, a year after Ulrichs’s speech in Munich, began his radical activities in 1896, publishing a pamphlet titled “Sappho and Socrates,” which told of the suicide of a gay man who felt coerced into marriage. The next year, Hirschfeld launched the Committee, and soon afterward reprinted Ulrichs’s writings. Building on Ulrichs’s insight that same-sex desire was a congenital trait, Hirschfeld developed a minutely variegated conception of human sexuality, with a spectrum of “sexual intermediaries” appearing between the poles of the purely male and the purely female. He felt certain that if homosexuality were understood as a biological inevitability then the prejudice against it would disappear. “Through Science to Justice” was his group’s motto.

Beachy is candid about Hirschfeld’s limitations. His scientific work blended research and advocacy to an uncomfortable degree, and some of his confederates employed suspect methodologies. (One associate’s study of male prostitution in Berlin involved sleeping with at least one hustler.) But Hirschfeld’s knowledge of sexuality was vast, and Beachy has several incisive pages comparing him favorably to Sigmund Freud, whose influence was, of course, far greater. Freud rejected the congenital hypothesis, believing

homosexuality to be a mutation of childhood development. Although Freud professed sympathy for gay people, American psychoanalysts later fostered the destructive notion that homosexuality could be cured through therapy. Freud was grandly systematic in his thinking; Hirschfeld was messily empirical. The latter got closer to the intricate reality of human sexuality.

Hirschfeld had enemies in Berlin’s gay scene. His interest in effeminacy among homosexual men, his attention to lesbianism, and his fascination with cross-dressing among both gay and straight populations (he coined the word “transvestism”) offended men who believed that their lust for fellow-males, especially for younger ones, made them *more* virile than the rest of the population. Being married to a woman was not seen as incompatible with such proclivities. In 1903, the malcontents, led by the writers Adolf Brand and Benedict Friedlaender, formed a group called *Gemeinschaft der Eigenen*, or Society of Self-Owners, the name referencing a concept from the anarchist

philosophy of Max Stirner. *Der Eigene*, Brand’s magazine, became their mouthpiece, mixing literary-philosophical musings with mildly pornographic photographs of boys throwing javelins. In the same camp was the writer Hans Blüher, who argued that eroticism was a bonding force in male communities; Blüher made a particular study of the Wandervogel movement, a band of nature-hiking youth. Nationalism, misogyny, and anti-Semitism were rampant in these masculinity-obsessed circles, and Hirschfeld’s Jewishness became a point of contention. He was deemed too worldly, too womanly, insufficiently devoted to the glistening Aryan male.

Beachy celebrates the inclusivity of Hirschfeld, who welcomed feminists into his coalition. Unfortunately, women are largely absent from “Gay Berlin.” There is no mention, for example, of the theatre and music critic Theo Anna Sprüngli, who, in 1904, spoke to the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee on the subject of “Homosexuality and the Women’s Movement,” helping



“That’s the first dollar I ever extorted.”

to inaugurate a parallel movement of lesbian activism. Sex between women was never explicitly outlawed in imperial Germany—Paragraph 175, the anti-sodomy law, applied only to men—but lesbians found it no easier to live an open life. Employing the alias Anna Rüling, Sprüngli proposed that the gay-rights and feminist movements “aid each other reciprocally”; the principles at stake in both struggles, she wrote, were freedom, equality, and “self-determination.” References to George Sand and Clara Schumann in her speech betray an essentially Romantic vision.

This story has a melancholy epilogue, as the historian Christiane Leiding has discovered. After Sprüngli gave her historic speech—one that may have exacerbated the split between the “masculinist” and the “sexological” factions of the gay movement, as Beachy calls them—she said nothing more about lesbianism. Instead, she fell into a conventional, even conservative, journalistic career, adopting a jingoistic tone during the First World War and concealing her radical past in the Nazi era. Perhaps she remained as openly lesbian as circumstances permitted; almost nothing is known of her later life. Yet her sudden silence suggests how quickly gains can slip away.

During the golden years of the Weimar Republic, which occupy the last chapters of “Gay Berlin,” gays and lesbians achieved an almost dizzying degree of visibility in popular culture. They could see themselves onscreen in films like “Mädchen in Uniform” and “Different from the Others”—a tale of a gay violinist driven to suicide, with Hirschfeld featured in the supporting role of a wise sexologist. Disdainful representations of gay life were not only lamented but also protested; Beachy points out that when a 1927 Komische Oper revue called “Strictly Forbidden” mocked gay men as effeminate, a demonstration at the theatre prompted the Komische Oper to remove the offending skit. The openness of Berlin’s gay scene attracted visitors from more benighted lands; Christopher Isherwood lived in the city from 1929 to 1933, enjoying the easy availability of hustlers, who, in Beachy’s book,

have a somewhat exhausting chapter to themselves.

Within the gay community, the masculinist-sexological split persisted. Hirschfeld was now at the helm of the Institute for Sexual Science: a museum, clinic, and research center, housed in a handsome villa in the Tiergarten district. Widening his sphere of interests, Hirschfeld offered sex advice to straight couples, advocated more liberal divorce laws and birth control, collaborated on the first primitive sex-change operations, and generally acquired a reputation as the “Einstein of sex,” as he was called on an American lecture tour. To the masculinists, Hirschfeld appeared to be running a sexual freak show. Adolf Brand published crude anti-Semitic attacks on Hirschfeld in the pages of *Der Eigene*. Some of Brand’s associates were flirting with Nazism, and not just in a metaphorical sense; one of them later became the lover of Ernst Röhm, the head of the Brown Shirts.

After the First World War, a new figure entered the fray: Friedrich Radszuweit, an entrepreneur who established a network of gay publications, including the first lesbian magazine, *Die Freundin*. Radszuweit hoped to heal divisions and establish a true mass movement—one from which he stood to make a great deal of money. In 1923, he took the lead in forming the Human Rights League, a consortium of gay groups. Distancing himself both from Hirschfeld’s emphasis on gender ambiguity and from Brand’s predatory focus on boys, Radszuweit purveyed a vision of “homosexual bourgeois respectability,” in Beachy’s words. Fearful of displaying political bias, Radszuweit attempted to placate the Nazis, believing that they, too, would see the light.

In fact, the driving force behind the Brown Shirts was a member of the Human Rights League, as Radszuweit must have known. Röhm never made a secret of his homosexuality, and Hitler chose to overlook it; although the Nazi leader had denounced Hirschfeld and the gay movement as early as 1920, he was too dependent on Röhm’s army of thugs to reject him. In the early thirties, German leftists tried to tarnish the Nazis by publicizing Röhm’s affiliations and affairs. Brand, having finally

grasped the ruthlessness of Hitler’s methods, joined the assault. “The most dangerous enemies of our fight are often homosexuals themselves,” he sagely observed. Hirschfeld, though, disliked the campaign against Röhm, and the conflation of homosexuality and Fascism that it implied. The practice of outing political figures had surfaced before—notably, during a prewar scandal surrounding Kaiser Wilhelm II’s adviser Prince Philipp zu Eulenburg-Hertefeld—and Hirschfeld had criticized the tactic, which was known as the “path over corpses.”

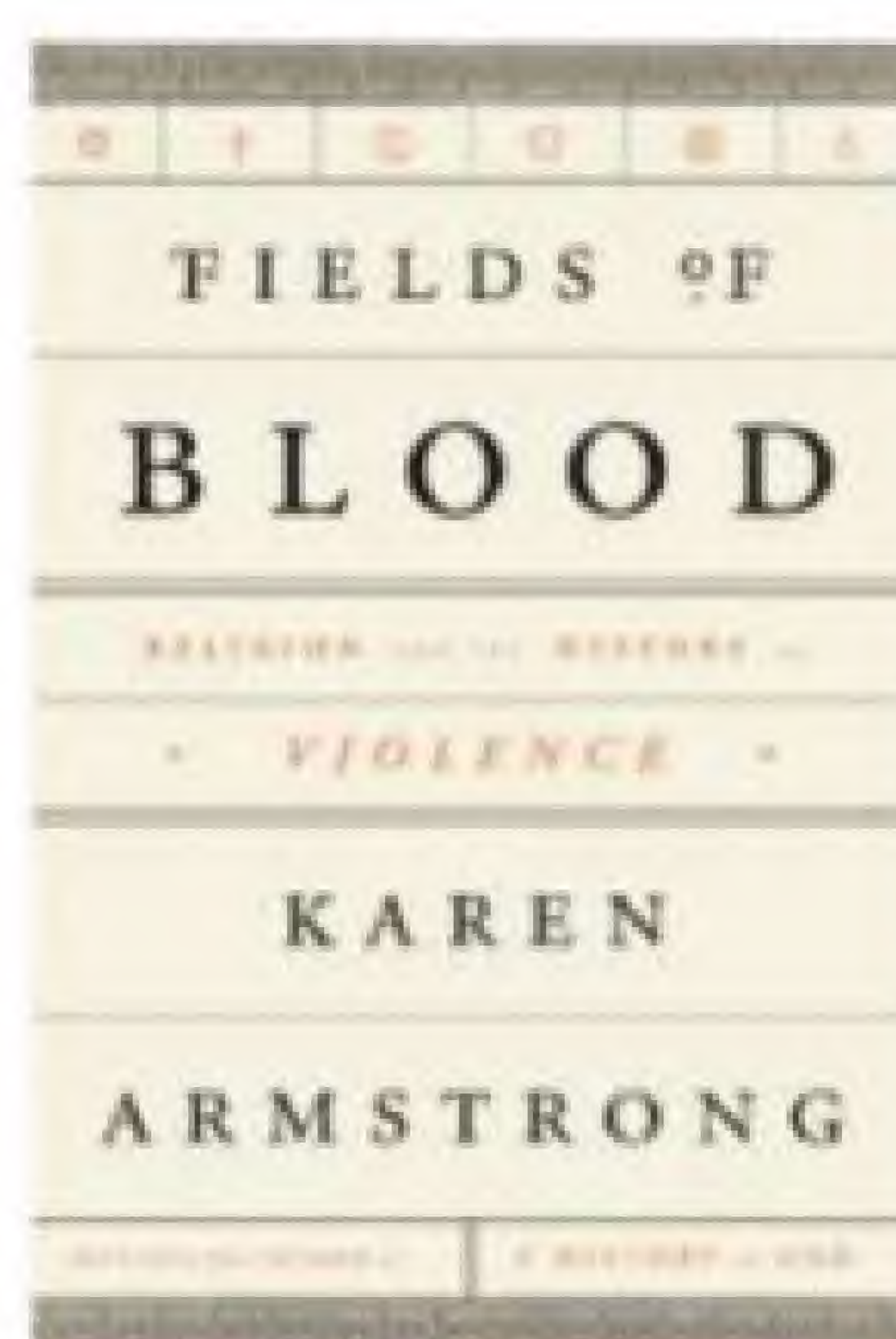
Nazism brought Berlin’s gay idyll to a swift, savage end. Hirschfeld had left Germany in 1930, to undertake a worldwide lecture tour; wisely, he never returned. In May, 1933, a little more than three months after Hitler became Reich Chancellor, the Institute for Sexual Science was ransacked, and much of its library went up in flames during Joseph Goebbels’s infamous book-burning in the Opernplatz. Röhm, who became less indispensable once Hitler took power, was slaughtered in 1934, during the Night of the Long Knives, the first great orgy of Nazi bloodlust. Hirschfeld, who had watched the destruction of his life’s work on a newsreel in Paris, died the next year. Brand somehow survived until 1945, when he fell victim to Allied bombs. Vestiges of Paragraph 175 lingered in the German legal code until 1994.

In the decades after the Second World War, German historiography fell under the sway of the *Sonderweg*, or “special path,” school, which held that the country was all but doomed to Nazism, because of the perennial weakness of its bourgeois liberal factions. Since then, many historians have turned against that deterministic way of thinking, and “Gay Berlin” follows suit: Germany here emerges as a chaotic laboratory of liberal experiment. Beachy’s cultivation of the “other” Germany, heterogeneous and progressive, is especially welcome, because the Anglophone literary marketplace fetishizes all things Nazi. Appearing in the same month as “Gay Berlin,” last fall, were “Artists Under Hitler,” “Hitler’s Europe Ablaze,” “Atatürk in the Nazi Imagination,” “The Jew Who Defeated

Hitler,” “Islam and Nazi Germany’s War,” “Nazi Germany and the Arab World,” and—an Amazon Kindle special—“The Adolf Hitler Cookbook.”

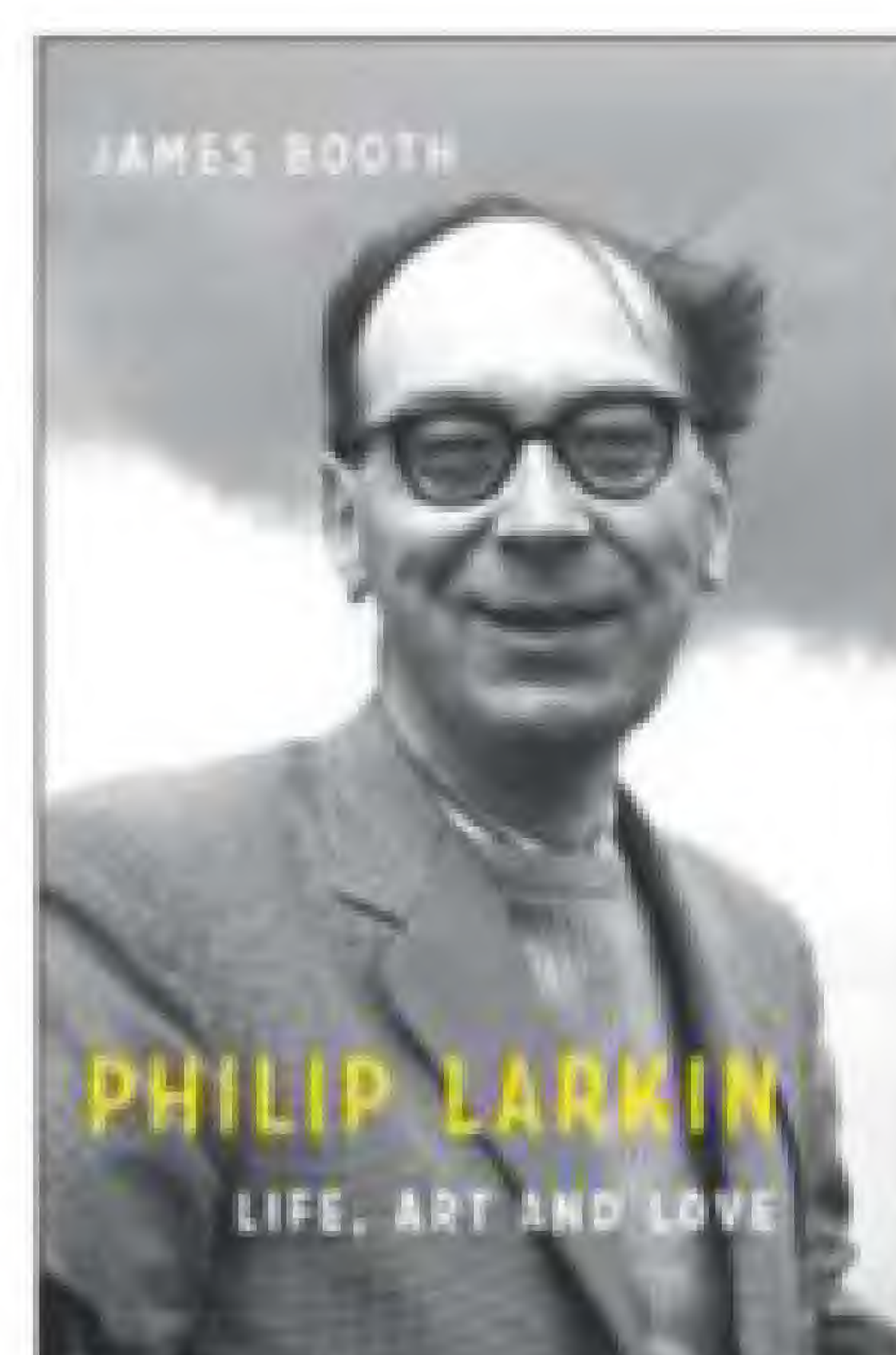
At the same time, Beachy enlarges our understanding of how the international gay-rights movement eventually prospered, despite the catastrophic setbacks that it experienced not only in Nazi Germany but also in mid-century America. Significantly, it was a German immigrant, Henry Gerber, who first brought the fight for gay rights to America, in the nineteen-twenties; Gerber’s short-lived Society for Human Rights, in Chicago, took inspiration from Hirschfeld and perhaps lifted its name from Radszuweit’s group. The Human Rights Campaign, a powerhouse of contemporary gay politics, which was first formed as a political action committee, in 1980, also echoes the German nomenclature, intentionally or not. Furthermore, Radszuweit’s determination to project a well-behaved, middle-class image anticipated the strategy that has allowed the H.R.C. and other organizations to achieve startling victories in recent years. German homosexuals—especially well-to-do men—began to win acceptance when they demanded equal treatment and otherwise conformed to prevailing mores. In this respect, Germany in the period from 1867 to 1933 bears a striking, perhaps unsettling, resemblance to twenty-first-century America.

I closed “Gay Berlin” with a deepened fondness for Hirschfeld, that prolix and imprecise thinker who liked to pose in a white lab coat and acquired the nickname Aunt Magnesia. The good doctor had a vision that went far beyond the victory of gay rights, narrowly defined; he preached the gorgeousness of difference, of deviations from the norm. From the beginning, he insisted on the idiosyncrasy of sexual identity, resisting any attempt to press men and women into fixed categories. To Hirschfeld, gender was an unstable, fluctuating entity; the male and the female were “abstractions, invented extremes.” He once calculated that there were 43,046,721 possible combinations of sexual characteristics, then indicated that the number was probably too small. He remains ahead of his time. ♦

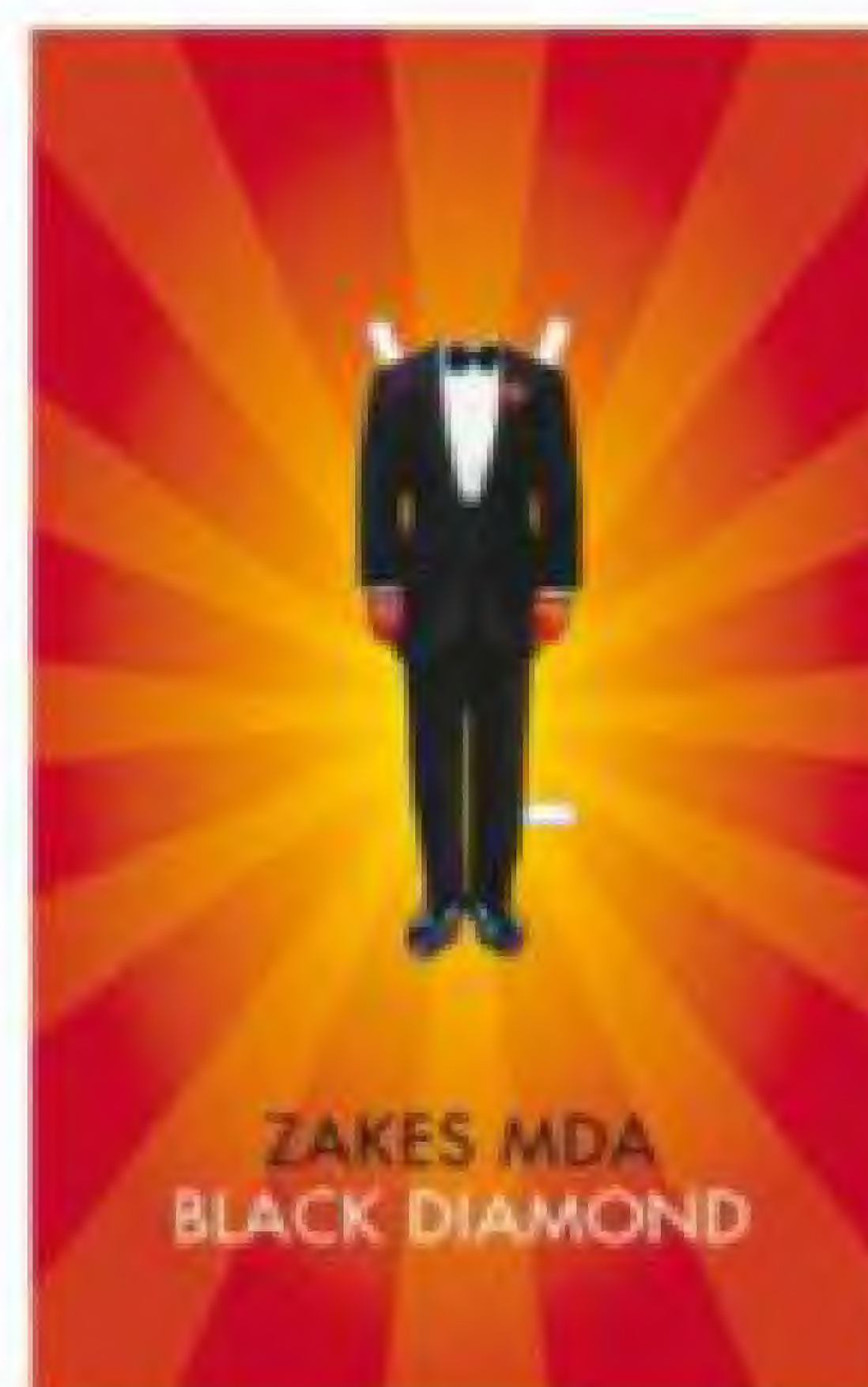


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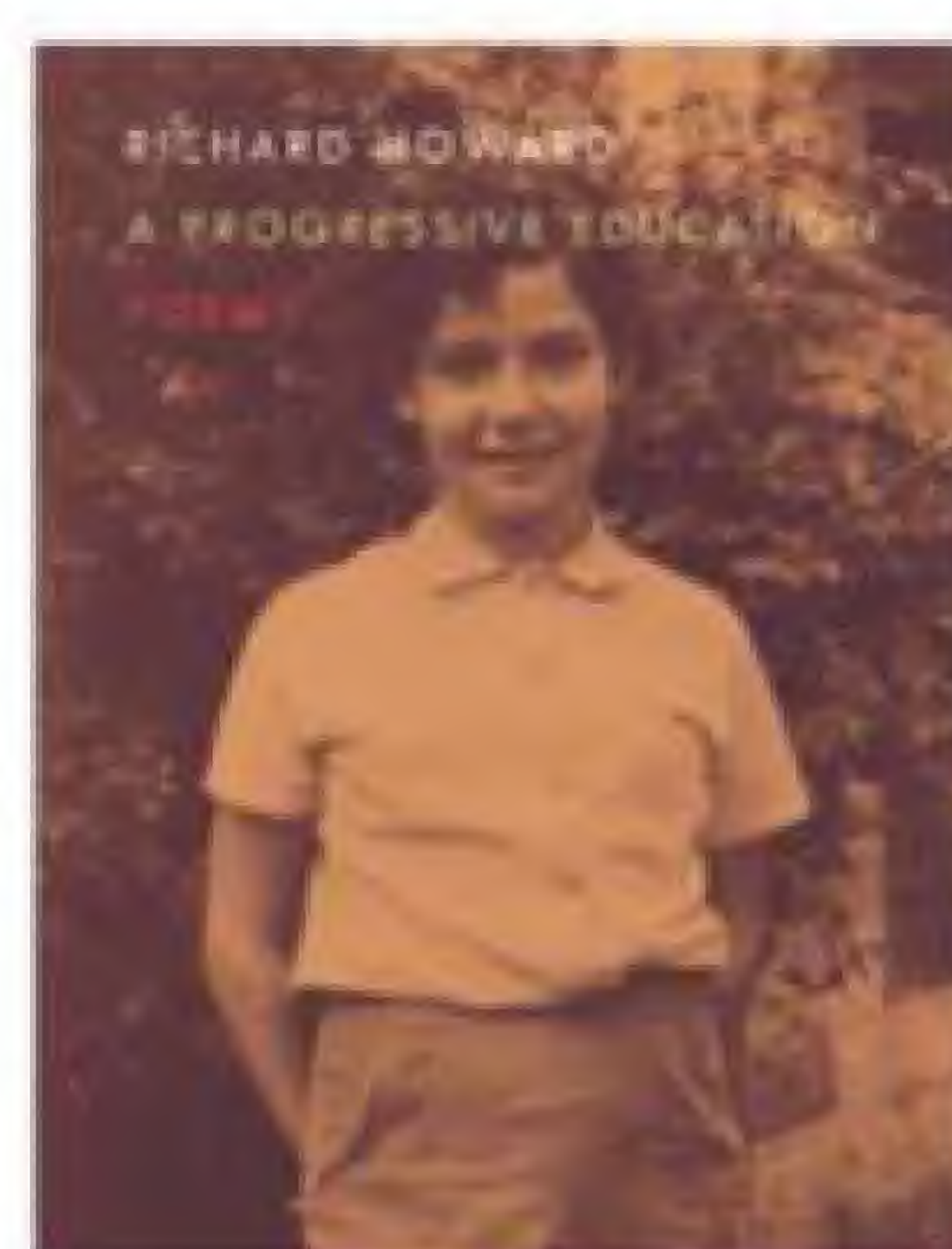
FIELDS OF BLOOD, by Karen Armstrong (*Knopf*). This study of religious violence stretches from the age of Gilgamesh to the present. Seeking to defend religion, Armstrong argues that it acts against violence as often as it encourages it; that civilization itself is inherently violent; that religious tradition is not “a single, unchanging essence”; and that, for most of human history, religion was indistinguishable from politics, society, and culture, and therefore “religious violence” was meaningless as a discrete category. All these points find ample support in the book’s careful review of history. But, as Armstrong acknowledges, the modern conception of religion is different, and she never fully confronts the peculiar power of religious enticements among those who would do violence today.



PHILIP LARKIN, by James Booth (*Bloomsbury*). This biography aims at repairing a reputation tarnished by the bigotry apparent in Larkin’s posthumously published correspondence. Noting that the poet produced some of the twentieth century’s most empathetic verse, Booth writes, “We might ask whether art and life can have been so deeply at odds with each other.” He attempts to illuminate the life through a chronological reading of the work. The mixture of biography and formal analysis proves, at times, disorienting as we flit between discussions of prosody and of infidelity. Still, Booth largely succeeds in ennobling Larkin through his contradictions, depicting a man for whom life was much more than, as he once wrote, “first boredom, then fear.”



BLACK DIAMOND, by Zakes Mda (*Seagull*). This novel depicts life in contemporary Johannesburg, twenty years after the end of apartheid. The narrative shifts frequently between the petty criminals who run brothels and chop shops and the so-called Black Diamonds, former freedom fighters whom the government’s Black Economic Empowerment policy has elevated to extreme wealth. But “the fruits of liberation are not for the foot soldier.” Don Mateza, once a commander on the front lines of the anti-apartheid struggle, works as a lowly bodyguard. When he is hired to protect Kristin Uys, a high-society magistrate, their divergent backgrounds and shared experiences produce a vibrant portrait of South Africa today.



A PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION, by Richard Howard (*Turtle Point*). Howard, a poet known for his dramatic monologues, explores the epistolary form in this late collection. Most of the fifteen poems are ostensibly written, in collaboration, by a class of mid-century sixth-graders in Sandusky, Ohio. The children are fond of small animals and would like to have one to hold in their laps for a whole class period. They have been shown a film about sex and find it appalling. When they speak of learning to use language, there is a touching sense of the poet reflecting on his own life’s work: “*the rare Covenant / of Utterance . . . a passionate, a life-/transforming Participation of the Tongue, / a shared response to all that Words express.*”

LEFT TURNS

The radical art of the nineteen-thirties.

BY PETER SCHJELDAHL



Bernarda Bryson Shahn's "The Lovestonite" plays on a split in the Communist Party.

All artists want to change the world, usually just by making it take special notice of them, but now and then they do so out of a devotion to larger hopes. "The Left Front: Radical Art in the 'Red Decade,' 1929-1940," a fascinating scholarly show at New York University's Grey Art Gallery, on Washington Square, illustrates the most sustained convergence of art and political activism in American history. Some one hundred works by forty artists, along with photographs and publications, tell a story that tends to figure in art history only as a background to the emergence of the Abstract Expressionist generation; Arshile Gorky, Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning, et al., shared poverty but not zeal with their marching contemporaries. (Gorky revered Stalin and joined demonstrations near his loft on Union Square, but he scorned proletarian art, pronouncing it "Poor art for poor people.")

The show makes visible a twisty saga that the critic Clement Greenberg, who started his career in the late nineteen-thirties at the initially Communist-sponsored *Partisan Review*, mentioned in passing in a 1961 book, "Art and Culture." He wrote, "Some day it will have to be told how 'anti-Stalinism,' which started out more or less as 'Trotskyism,' turned into art for art's sake, and thereby cleared the way, heroically, for what was to come."

The show originated at Northwestern University, where it was curated by John Murphy and Jill Bugajski, and it focussed on the movement's legacy in Chicago. ("Left Front" was the name of an activist magazine published in that city in the early thirties.) It has now been expanded with material from New York, where the era's leading organizations of radical artists began: the John Reed Club, in 1929, and its Popular Front successor, the American Art-

ists' Congress, in 1936. The term "Red Decade" casts an ironic pall. It was the title of an influential book, published in 1941, in which the journalist Eugene Lyons attacked those groups as fronts for Moscow, in the course of recounting his disillusionment with the Soviet Union, where he had worked for the United Press and, in 1930, had been the first American reporter to interview Stalin—admiringly. In truth, a naïve romance with Soviet Communism is inseparable from the character of and essential to the unity of the artists' movement. The unity dissipated gradually, at first, as the lines blurred, when the Moscow Popular Front, seeking allies against Berlin, embraced a wider range of foreign fellow-travellers (even those who weren't radical so much as just anti-Fascist); the New Deal programs extended a disarming support to artists; and the exiled Leon Trotsky gave his blessing to even apparently apolitical avant-gardism as being inherently progressive. It essentially collapsed after Stalin concluded a non-aggression pact with Hitler and invaded Finland, in 1939. During the following year, the American Artists' Congress lost the vast majority of its roughly nine hundred members.

The Soviet Communist Party prompted the dissolution of the John Reed Clubs in the United States in 1936, but at one point there were thirty of them, named for the dashing American journalist and poet who recounted the Bolshevik Revolution in his book "Ten Days That Shook the World" (1919) and died of typhus in Moscow, in 1920, at the age of thirty-two. The clubs' founding manifesto called for a defense of the "Soviet Union against capitalist aggression" and a "fight against the influence of middle-class ideas in the work of revolutionary writers and artists." The latter aim proved difficult to enforce. The Grey Gallery show includes a fair number of Expressionistic paintings, drawings, and prints that exhort the proletariat with images of suffering masses, savage cops, fat-cat oppressors, and the "industrial Frankenstein." But the aesthetic zest of sheer modernity leaks through in the work of such artists as the Ukraine-born Louis Lozowick, a still underrated virtuosic precisionist. His elegant lithograph "Construction"

(1930), showing work on a New York street, with a cutaway view of stacked wooden supports underground, is formally inventive and feels celebratory. The ebullient modernist Stuart Davis is a case unto himself. He guiltlessly pursued Cubist-derived abstraction while maintaining leftist bona fides. The irrepressibly charming pictures of street life by Kenneth Hayes Miller and Isabel Bishop, who became known as “Fourteenth Street realists,” earned a rebuke, in 1933, from the great art historian Meyer Schapiro (then radically allied), for neglecting the “social meaning of the objects.” When, in 1931, the John Reed-affiliated Americans showed their works in Moscow, their indiscipline bemused Soviet critics.

Downtown, late-night cafeterias were the sites of floating political and artistic discussion and acrimony. The one outright funny work in the show, a color lithograph titled “The Lovestonite” (1933), finds two hatted and besuited men at a table, with coffee cups, looking tense as another walks by. The seated men are evidently solid Communists, and the third is a follower of Jay Lovestone, who was the national secretary of the American Communist Party until 1929, when he was expelled for promoting moderate policies. (The lively artist, unfamiliar to me, is Bernarda Bryson Shahn, the companion and, later, the wife of the most popularly successful of the American leftist artists, Ben Shahn, with whom she collaborated on New Deal projects.) Related heresies erupted at *Partisan Review*, which the John Reed Club of New York founded in 1934, as a high-

brow adjunct to the Communist Party’s large-circulation magazine, *New Masses*. The *Review* ceased publication for a year, starting in late 1936, and when it resumed it hewed first to the expansive ideological drift of Trotsky—who wrote in a 1938 letter to its editors, “Art can become a strong ally of revolution only insofar as it remains faithful to itself”—and then to anti-Communism across the board.

Early sections of the show dramatize a gravitational force field of revolutionary agitation and sentiment. Later ones evince broken ranks and faltering hopes. Most poignant is a suite of woodcuts of folkish scenes made by Jewish artists in Chicago, in 1937, to celebrate Stalin’s creation of a Jewish autonomous region, Biro-Bidjan, in Siberia. They were meant as a gift to a museum planned to be built there, but they never arrived, and the region’s citizens, according to a wall text in the show, “fell victim to famine, poverty, and disease.” Most curious is a section titled “Social Mysticism,” whose works express nebulous visions less of a revolution than of a cosmic apocalypse, in watered-down variants of Surrealism. The standout here is Rockwell Kent, whose leftist leanings hardly interfered with his prodigious fame as a powerful image-maker: his boldly rendered landscapes and heroic figures, as well as his satirical drawings, were frequent fare in illustrated books and popular magazines, including *Life* and *Vanity Fair*. (A *New Yorker* writer remarked, in 1937, “That day will mark a precedent, which brings no news of Rockwell Kent.”) The tendency most dramatically missing from the move-

ment is Socialist Realism—utopian subjects, academic forms—which, in 1934, became by diktat the sole style allowed Soviet artists. In America, the nearest equivalents to that ideal were advanced by American Scene painters, such as Thomas Hart Benton and John Steuart Curry, whose patriotic content—folk heroes, sturdy Midwestern farmers—irked leftists.

Writers in the show’s handsome brochure are at pains to adduce a present-day relevance for Red Decade art. John Murphy cites recurrences of economic and political distress and, inevitably, points to Occupy Wall Street—more a phenomenon than a movement, whose evanescence somewhat spoils the comparison. Artists are hard to herd. Events may galvanize groups of them—those who participated in ACT UP, the concerted response to the AIDS crisis that took form in 1987, are a shining example—but they make for feckless cadres. Marxist idealism and the menace of Fascism help to explain the remarkably prolonged appeal of leftist conviction in the art of the thirties. So do the alarm of the Spanish Civil War and the glamour of the Mexican mural movement. The few works that address these last two factors only hint at their significance in a show that I wish some museum would take as the seed for a major, broadly inclusive exhibition. But this show mainly demonstrates the decisive—until it was divisive—role of doctrinaire organizations. I’m left with the comedy of Bryson Shahn’s cafeteria anecdote. Who wants to be implicated in that sort of ideological-puppet scenario ever again? ♦

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CARTOON CAPTION CONTEST

Each week, we provide a cartoon in need of a caption. You, the reader, submit a caption, we choose three finalists, and you vote for your favorite. Caption submissions for this week's cartoon, by Tom Toro, must be received by Sunday, January 25th. The finalists in the January 12th contest appear below. We will announce the winner, and the finalists in this week's contest, in the February 9th issue. The winner receives a signed print of the cartoon. Any resident of the United States, Canada (except Quebec), Australia, the United Kingdom, or the Republic of Ireland age eighteen or over can enter or vote. To do so, and to read the complete rules, visit contest.newyorker.com.

THE WINNING CAPTION



"I faked my applause."
Sandy Treadwell, Ojai, Calif.



THE FINALISTS

"So, where do you see yourself in five thousand years?"
Patricia Barroll Sellman, San Francisco, Calif.

"I may have something for you in Vegas."
Press Millen, Raleigh, N.C.

"How long have you been in your current position?"
Norman Sunshine, Sarasota, Fla.

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST



“

”

“SEXY & GORGEOUS.

**JAKE GYLLENHAAL & RUTH WILSON
ARE PERFECTLY MATCHED IN THE MOST
SOPHISTICATED DATE PLAY BROADWAY HAS SEEN.”**

The New York Times

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By **NICK PAYNE** Directed by **MICHAEL LONGHURST**



**“JAKE GYLLENHAAL & RUTH WILSON
WILL BLOW YOUR MIND.”**

NY1

“A SINGULAR ASTONISHMENT.”

The New Yorker

PHOTO BY JASON BELL



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